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Charles Eliot Norton

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Edited by Professor Norton

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BOSTON AND NEW YORK

THE NEW LIFE

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

Però se le mie rime avran difetto,
Ch' entreran nella loda di costei,
Di ciò si biasmi il debole intelletto,
E 'l parlar nostro, che non ha valore
Di ritrar tutto ciò che dice Amore.

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THE NEW LIFE.

PROEM.

In that part of the book of my memory before which little can be read is found a rubric which says: *Incipit Vita Nova* [The New Life begins]. Under which rubric I find the words written which it is my intention to copy into this little book, — and if not all of them, at least their meaning.

II.

Nine times now, since my birth, the heaven of light had turned almost to the same point in its own gyration, when the glorious Lady of my mind, who was called Beatrice by many who knew not what to call her, first appeared before my eyes. She had already been in this life so long that in its course the starry heaven had moved toward the region of the East one of the twelve parts of a degree; so that at about the beginning of her ninth year she appeared to me, and I near the end of my ninth

year saw her. She appeared to me clothed in a most noble color, a modest and becoming crimson, and she was girt and adorned in such wise as befitted her very youthful age. At that instant, I say truly that the spirit of life, which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble with such violence that it appeared fearfully in the least pulses, and, trembling, said these words: *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi* [Behold a god stronger than I, who coming shall rule over me].

At that instant the spirit of the soul, which dwells in the high chamber to which all the spirits of the senses carry their perceptions, began to marvel greatly, and, speaking especially to the spirit of the sight, said these words: *Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra* [Now has appeared your bliss].

At that instant the natural spirit, which dwells in that part where our nourishment is supplied, began to weep, and, weeping, said these words: *Heu miser! quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps* [Woe is me, wretched! because often from this time forth shall I be hindered].

I say that from that time forward Love lorded it over my soul, which had been so speedily wedded to him: and he began to exercise over me such control and such lordship, through the power which my imagination gave to him, that it behoved me

to do completely all his pleasure. He commanded me ofttimes that I should seek to see this youthful angel; so that I in my boyhood often went seeking her, and saw her of such noble and praiseworthy deportment, that truly of her might be said that word of the poet Homer, "She seems not the daughter of mortal man, but of God." And though her image, which stayed constantly with me, gave assurance to Love to hold lordship over me, yet it was of such noble virtue that it never suffered Love to rule me without the faithful counsel of the reason in those matters in which it were useful to hear such counsel. And since to dwell upon the passions and actions of such early youth seems like telling an idle tale, I will leave them, and, passing over many things which might be drawn from the original where these lie hidden, I will come to those words which are written in my memory under larger paragraphs.

III.

When so many days had passed that nine years were exactly complete since the above-described apparition of this most gentle lady, on the last of these days it happened that this admirable lady appeared to me, clothed in purest white, between two gentle ladies who were of greater age; and,

passing along a street, turned her eyes toward that place where I stood very timidly; and by her ineffable courtesy, which is to-day rewarded in the eternal world, saluted me with such virtue that it seemed to me then that I saw all the bounds of bliss. The hour when her most sweet salutation reached me was precisely the ninth of that day; and since it was the first time that her words came to my ears, I took in such sweetness, that, as it were intoxicated, I turned away from the folk; and, betaking myself to the solitude of my own chamber, I sat myself down to think of this most courteous lady.

And thinking of her, a sweet slumber overcame me, in which a marvellous vision appeared to me; for methought I saw in my chamber a cloud of the color of fire, within which I discerned a shape of a Lord of aspect fearful to whoso might look upon him; and he seemed to me so joyful within himself that a marvellous thing it was; and in his words he said many things which I understood not, save a few, among which I understood these: *Ego Dominus tuus* [I am thy Lord]. In his arms meseemed to see a person sleeping, naked, save that she seemed to me to be wrapped lightly in a crimson cloth; whom I, regarding very intently, recognized as the lady of the salutation, who had the day before deigned to salute me. And in one of

his hands it seemed to me that he held a thing which was all on fire; and it seemed to me that he said to me these words: *Vide cor tuum* [Behold thy heart]. And when he had remained awhile, it seemed to me that he awoke her that slept; and he so far prevailed upon her with his craft as to make her eat that thing which was burning in his hand; and she ate it timidly. After this, it was but a short while before his joy turned into most bitter lament; and as he wept he gathered up this lady in his arms, and with her it seemed to me that he went away toward heaven. Whereat I felt such great anguish, that my weak slumber could not endure it, but was broken, and I awoke. And straightway I began to reflect, and found that the hour in which this vision had appeared to me had been the fourth of the night; so that, it plainly appears, it was the first hour of the nine last hours of the night.

And thinking on what had appeared to me, I resolved to make it known to many who were famous poets at that time; and since I had already seen in myself the art of discoursing in rhyme, I resolved to make a sonnet in which I would salute all the liegemen of Love, and, praying them to give an interpretation of my vision, would write to them that which I had seen in my slumber. And I began then this sonnet: —

To every captive soul and gentle heart
Unto whose sight may come the present word,
That they thereof to me their thoughts impart,
Be greeting in Love's name, who is their Lord.
Now of those hours wellnigh one third had gone
What time doth every star appear most bright,
When on a sudden Love before me shone,
Remembrance of whose nature gives me fright.
Joyful to me seemed Love, and he was keeping
My heart within his hands, while on his arm
He held my lady, covered o'er, and sleeping.
Then waking her, he with this flaming heart
Did humbly feed her fearful of some harm.
Thereon I saw him thence in tears depart.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first part I offer greeting, and ask for a reply; in the second I signify to what the reply is to be made. The second part begins here: "Now of."

To this sonnet reply was made by many, and of diverse opinions. Among those who replied to it was he whom I call first of my friends, and he then wrote a sonnet which begins, "All worth, in my opinion, thou hast seen." And this was, as it were, the beginning of the friendship between him and me, when he knew that I was he who had sent it to him.

The true meaning of this dream was not then seen by any one, but now it is plain to the simplest.

IV.

After this vision my natural spirit began to be hindered in its operation, for my soul was wholly given over to the thought of this most gentle lady; whereby in brief time I fell into so frail and feeble a condition, that my appearance was grievous to many of my friends; and many full of envy eagerly sought to know from me that which above all I wished to conceal from others. And I, perceiving their evil questioning, through the will of Love, who commanded me according to the counsel of the reason, replied to them, that it was Love who had brought me to this pass. I spoke of Love, because I bore on my face so many of his signs that this could not be concealed. And when they asked me: "For whom has Love thus wasted thee?" I, smiling, looked at them and said nothing.

V.

One day it happened that this most gentle lady was sitting apart, where words concerning the Queen of Glory were to be heard; and I was in a place from which I saw my bliss. And in the direct line between her and me sat a gentle lady of very pleasing aspect, who often looked at me, wondering at my gaze, which seemed as if it ended

upon her; so that many observed her looking. And such note was taken of it, that, as I departed from this place, I heard say near me: "Behold how that lady wastes the life of this man;" and naming her, I understood that they spoke of her who had been in the path of the straight line which, parting from the most gentle Beatrice, had ended in my eyes. Then I took great comfort, being sure that my secret had not been communicated to others on that day through my eyes; and at once I thought to make of this gentle lady a screen of the truth; and in a short time I made such show of it that many persons who held discourse about me believed that they knew my secret.

With this lady I dissembled for some months and years; and in order to establish in others a firmer credence, I wrote for her certain trifles in rhyme, which it is not my intention to transcribe here, save in so far as they might serve to treat of that most gentle Beatrice; and therefore I will leave them all, save that I will write something of them which seems to be praise of her.

VI.

I say that, during the time while this lady was the screen of so great a love as possessed me, the will came to me to record the name of that most gentle one, and to accompany it with many names of ladies, and especially with the name of this gentle lady; and I took the names of sixty of the most beautiful ladies of the city where my lady had been placed by the Most High Lord, and I composed an epistle in the form of a *serventese*, which I will not transcribe; and of which I would not have made mention, but for the sake of telling this which fell out marvellously in its composition, namely, that in no other place did the name of my lady endure to stand, but as the ninth in number among the names of these ladies.

VII.

The lady with whom I had so long concealed my will was obliged to depart from the above-mentioned city, and go to a very distant place; whereat I, wellnigh dismayed by reason of the fair defence which had failed me, did more discomfort me than I myself would beforehand have believed. And, thinking that, if I did not speak somewhat grievingly of her departure, people would sooner

become acquainted with my secret, I resolved to make some lament for it in a sonnet, which I will transcribe because my lady was the immediate occasion of certain words which are in the sonnet, as is evident to whoever understands it; and then I devised this sonnet: —

O ye who turn your steps along Love's way,
Consider, and then say,
If there be any grief than mine more great:
That ye to hear me deign, I only pray;
Then fancy, as ye may,
If I am every torment's inn and gate.
'T was not my little goodness to repay,
But bounty to display,
Love gave me such a sweet and pleasant fate,
That many times I heard behind me say,
"Ah, through what merit, pray,
Hath this man's heart become so light of late?"
But now is wholly lost my hardihead,
Which came from out a treasure of Love's own,
And I stay poor alone,
So that of speech there cometh to me dread.
Thus wishing now to do like unto one
Who, out of shame, concealeth his disgrace,
I wear a joyful face,
While in my heart I waste away and groan.

This sonnet has two principal parts; for in the first I intend to cry to the liegemen of Love with those words of Jeremy the prophet: O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte,

si est dolor sicut dolor meus [All ye that pass by, behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow] : *and to pray them to deign to listen to me. In the second I relate where Love had set me, with other intent than that which the last parts of the sonnet indicate ; and I tell that which I have lost. The second part begins here :* "'T was not my."

VIII.

After the departure of this gentle lady it pleased the Lord of the Angels to call unto His glory a lady young and of exceeding gentle aspect, who had been very lovely in the above-mentioned city ; whose body I saw lying without its soul, in midst of many ladies who were weeping very pitifully. Then, remembering that formerly I had seen her in company with that most gentle one, I could not restrain some tears ; nay, weeping, I resolved to say some words about her death, in guerdon for that I had seen her sometimes with my lady. And thereon I touched somewhat in the last part of the words that I said of her, as plainly appears to him who understands them. And I devised then these two sonnets ; the first of which begins, *Lovers, l'ument ;* the second, *Discourteous death : —*

Lovers, lament, since Love himself now cries,
Hearing what cause 't is maketh him to weep.
Love seëth ladies mourn in sorrow deep,
Showing their bitter grieving through their eyes;
Because discourteous Death, on gentle heart
Working his cruel, unrelenting ways,
Hath all despoiled which in the world wins praise
For gentle dame, excepting honor's part.
Hear ye what honor Love to her did pay;
For him in real form I saw lament
Above the lovely image of the dead;
And often toward the heaven he raised his head,
Whereto the gentle soul had made ascent
Which had been mistress of a shape so gay.

This first sonnet is divided into three parts. In the first, I call and solicit the liegemen of Love to weep; and I say that their Lord weeps, and that, hearing the cause why he weeps, they should be the more ready to listen to me. In the second, I relate the cause. In the third, I speak of certain honor that Love paid to this lady. The second part begins here: "Love seëth:" *the third, here:* "Hear ye."

Discourteous Death, of clemency the foe,
Mother from old of woe,
Thou judgment irresistible, severe,
Since sorrow to this heart thou dost not spare,
Therefore in grief I go,
And blaming thee my very tongue outwear.

And since I wish of grace to strip thee bare,
Behoves me to declare
The wrong of wrongs in this thy guilty blow;
Not that the folk do not already know,
But to make each thy foe,
Who henceforth shall be nurtured with Love's care,
From out the world thou courtesy hast ta'en,
And virtue, which in woman is to praise;
And in youth's gayest days
The charm of love thou hast untimely slain.
Who is this lady I will not declare,
Save as her qualities do make her known;
Who merits heaven, alone
May have the hope her company to share.

This sonnet is divided into four parts. In the first I call Death by certain names proper to her; in the second, speaking to her, I tell the reason why I am moved to reproach her; in the third, I revile her; in the fourth, I turn to speak to an indefinite person, although definite as regards my meaning. The second part begins here: "Since sorrow;" *the third, here:* "And since I wish;" *the fourth, with* "Who merits."

IX.

Some days after the death of this lady, a thing happened wherefore it behoved me to leave the above-mentioned city, and to go toward those parts

where that gentle lady was who had been my defence, though the end of my journey was not distant so far as she was. And notwithstanding I was outwardly in company with many, the journey displeased me, so that hardly could sighs relieve the anguish which the heart felt, because I was going away from my bliss. And then that most sweet Lord, who was lording it over me through virtue of the most gentle lady, appeared in my imagination like a pilgrim lightly clad and in mean raiment. He seemed disheartened, and was looking upon the ground, save that sometimes it seemed to me his eyes were turned upon a beautiful, swift and very clear stream, which was flowing along by the road upon which I was.

It seemed to me that Love called me, and said to me these words: "I come from that lady who has been so long thy defence, and I know that she will not come back; and therefore that heart which I made thee keep with her I have it with me, and I carry it to a lady who will be thy defence, as this one was;" and he called her by name, so that I knew her well. "But, however, of these words which I have spoken unto thee, if thou shouldst tell any of them, tell them in such wise that the feigned love which thou hast shown for this lady, and which it will behove thee to show for another, shall not be revealed through them." And when

he had thus spoken, all this my imagination disappeared of a sudden, through the exceeding great part of himself which, it seemed to me, Love bestowed on me. And, as if changed in my aspect, I rode that day very pensive and accompanied by many sighs. The next day I began this sonnet: —

As I the other day rode far from glad
Along a way it pleased me not to take,
I came on Love, who did his journey make,
In the light garment of a pilgrim clad.
His countenance, it seemed to me, was sad,
As if he grieved for his lost lordship's sake;
Pensive he came, and forth his sighs did break;
Not to see folk, his head bowed down he had.
When me he saw, by name he called to me,
And said, "I come from that far distant part
Where through my will thy heart did dwell of late.
I bring it now on new delight to wait."
Thereon I took of him so great a part
That quick he vanished; how, I did not see.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first part I tell how I found Love, and what he seemed to me; in the second, I tell that which he said to me, though not completely, through the fear that I had of disclosing my secret; in the third, I tell how he disappeared. The second begins here: "When me he saw;" *the third, here:* "Thereon I took."

X.

After my return, I set myself to seek out that lady whom my Lord had named to me on the road of sighs. And to the end that my speech may be more brief, I say that in short time I made her my defence to such degree, that very many people spoke of it beyond the terms of courtesy; wherefore many times it weighed heavily upon me. And on this account, namely, because of this injurious talk, which seemed to impute vice to me, that most gentle lady, who was the destroyer of all the vices and the queen of the virtues, passing by a certain place, denied me her most sweet salute, in which lay all my bliss. And departing a little from the present subject, I will declare that which her salutation with its virtue wrought in me.

XI.

I say that, whenever she appeared in any place, in the hope of her marvellous salutation there no longer remained to me an enemy; nay, a flame of charity possessed me, which made me pardon every one who had done me wrong; and had any one at that time questioned me of anything, my only answer would have been "Love," and my face would have been clothed with humility. And

when she was about to salute me, a spirit of Love, destroying all the other spirits of the senses, urged forth the feeble spirits of the sight, and said to them, "Go and do honor to your lady," and he remained in their place. And whoever had wished to know Love might have done so by looking at the trembling of my eyes. And when this most gentle lady saluted me, Love was no such mediator that he had power to shade for me the insupportable bliss, but he, as if through excess of sweetness, became such, that my body, which was wholly under his rule, oftentimes moved like a heavy, inanimate thing. Hereby it plainly appears that in her salutation abode my bliss, which oftentimes surpassed and overflowed my capacity.

XII.

Now returning to my subject, I say that, after my bliss was denied to me, such grief came to me that, withdrawing from folk, I went into a solitary place to bathe the earth with most bitter tears. And when this weeping was a little assuaged, I betook myself to my chamber, where I could lament without being heard. And here, calling upon the lady of courtesy for pity, and saying, "Love, help thy liegeman!" I fell asleep, like a little beaten child, in tears.

It happened, about the middle of my sleep, that I seemed to see in my chamber a youth sitting at my side, clothed in whitest raiment, and very thoughtful in his aspect. He was looking upon me where I lay; and when he had looked upon me for some time, it seemed to me that, sighing, he called me and said to me these words: *Fili mi, tempus est ut prætermittantur simulata nostra* [My son, it is time that our feignings be given up]. Then it seemed to me that I recognized him, since he called me even as he had many times before called me in my slumbers.

And, looking at him, it seemed to me that he wept piteously, and it seemed that he waited for some word from me. Wherefore, taking heart, I began to speak thus with him: "Lord of nobleness, why dost thou weep?" And he said to me these words: *Ego tanquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentiæ partes; tu autem non sic* [I am as the centre of a circle to which the parts of the circumference bear an equal relation; but thou art not so]. Then, thinking on his words, it seemed to me that he had spoken to me very obscurely, so that I forced myself to speak, and said to him these words: "What is this, Lord, which thou sayest to me with such obscurity?" And he said to me in the common tongue: "Ask no more than may be useful to thee."

And therefore I began to discourse with him of the salutation which had been denied me, and I asked of him the reason; whereupon in this wise he replied to me: "This our Beatrice heard from certain persons who talked of thee, that the lady whom I named to thee on the road of sighs was receiving from thee some harm. And therefore this most gentle lady, who is adverse to every harm, did not deign to salute thy person, fearing lest it should be harmful. Wherefore, to the end that the truth of thy long-kept secret may be somewhat known to her, I will that thou say certain words in rhyme, in which thou shalt set forth the power that I hold over thee through her, and how thou wert straightway hers even from thy boyhood; and for this, call as a witness him who knows it, and also do thou pray him that he should tell it to her. And I, who am he, willingly will speak to her of it; and through this she shall understand thy will, and, understanding it, shall interpret aright the words of the deceived. Make, as it were, a mediator of these words, so that thou speak not to her directly, for this is not befitting. And without me send them nowhere where they might be heard by her; but take care to adorn them with sweet harmony, wherein I shall be whenever there shall be need."

And having said these words he disappeared,

and my sleep was broken. Then I, remembering myself, found that this vision had appeared to me in the ninth hour of the day; and before I went out from that chamber I resolved to make a ballad in which I would execute that which my Lord had laid upon me, and I made this ballad: —

Ballad, I send thee forth upon Love's trace,
For thou must him before my Lady bring,
So that of my excuse, which thou dost sing,
My Lord may then with her speak face to face.
Such courteous aspect, Ballad, thou dost show,
That all alone, indeed,
Thou oughtest not in any place to fear;
But if securely thou dost wish to go,
First to find Love is need,
For ill it were without Him to appear;
Seeing that she who ought thy words to hear,
If she be angry, as I think, with me,
And thou with Him companioned should not be,
Might lightly make thee fall into disgrace.
With dulcet sound, when with Him thou mayst be,
Begin with words like these,
First begging her that she would pity take: —
"Lady, he who to you now sendeth me
Wills, when to you it please,
That his excuse you deign to hear me make.
Love is that one who, for thy beauty's sake,
Makes him, as He doth will, his looks to change;
Then why He made his eyes on others range,
Think you, since in his heart no change hath place."

Tell her: "O Lady, this his heart is stayed
With faith so firmly just,
Save to serve you, it hath no other care.
Early 't was yours, and never hath it strayed."
But if she thee distrust,
Say, "Ask of Love, who will the truth declare.";
And at the end, beg her, with humble prayer,
That if it trouble her to pardon give,
She then should bid that I no longer live,
Nor shall she see her servant sue for grace.
And say to Him who is compassion's key,
Ere from her thou depart,
That He may tell her of my reason fair, —
"Through favor unto my sweet melody,
Stay with her where thou art,
And of thy servant, what thou wilt, declare.
And if she grant forgiveness through thy prayer,
Make peace on her fair countenance to shine."
When it may please thee, gentle Ballad mine,
Honor to win, go forth upon thy race.

This ballad is divided into three parts. In the first, I tell it whither it is to go, and encourage it that it may go the more assured; and I tell whose company it is to seek, if it wishes to go securely, and without any danger. In the second, I tell that which it is beholden to make known. In the third, I give it leave to go when it will, commending its going to the arms of fortune. The second part begins, "With dulcet sound;" *the third,* "When it may please thee." *Some*

man may object against me and say, that he understands not to whom my speech in the second person is addressed, since the ballad is naught else but these words which I am speaking; and therefore I say that I intend to solve and clear up this doubt in this little book, even in a more difficult passage; and then he who may here be in doubt, or who may choose to object after that fashion, will understand.

XIII.

After this above-described vision, having now spoken the words that Love had imposed on me to speak, many and diverse thoughts began to assail and to try me, and against each I was as it were without defence. Among which thoughts four chiefly hindered the repose of my life. One of them was this: "The lordship of Love is good, in that it withdraws the inclination of his liegeman from all vile things." The next was this: "The lordship of Love is not good, because the more fidelity his liegeman bears to him, so much the heavier and more grievous trials he must needs endure." The next was this: "The name of Love is so sweet to hear, that it seems to me impossible that his effects in most things should be other than sweet, seeing that names follow the things named,

as it is written, *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum*" [Names are consequences of things]. The fourth was this: "The lady through whom Love thus binds thee is not as other ladies that her heart may be lightly moved." And each thought so assailed me that it made me stand like one who knows not by which way to take his journey, and who desires to go, and knows not whither he should go. And if I thought of desiring to seek a way common to them, namely, that wherein all would accord, this way was very hostile to me, namely, to call upon and put myself in the arms of Pity. And while I abode in this condition, the will came to me to write some rhymed words thereon, and I devised then this sonnet: —

All of my thoughts concerning Love discourse,
And have in them so great variety,
That one to wish his sway compelleth me,
Another argues evil of his force;
One, hoping, sweetness doth to me impart,
Another makes me oftentimes lament;
Only in craving Pity they consent,
Trembling with fear that is within my heart.
Thus know I not from which my theme to take;
I fain would speak, and know not what to say;
In such perplexities of love I live:
And if with all to make accord I strive,
I needs unto my very foe must pray,
My Lady Pity, my defence to make.

This sonnet may be divided into four parts. In the first, I say and declare that all my thoughts are concerning Love: in the second, I say that they are diverse, and I relate their diversity: in the third, I say in what they all seem to accord: in the fourth, I say that, wishing to speak of Love, I know not from which to take my theme, and if I wish to take it from them all, I needs must call upon my foe, my Lady Pity. I say "my Lady," as it were in a scornful mode of speech. The second begins here: "And have in them;" *the third,* "Only in craving;" *the fourth,* "Thus know I."

XIV.

After the battle of the diverse thoughts, it happened that this most gentle lady went to a place where many gentle ladies were assembled; to which place I was conducted by a friendly person, who thought to give me a great pleasure in leading me where so many ladies were displaying their beauties. Wherefore I, hardly knowing whereunto I had been led, and trusting myself to the person who had conducted his friend to the verge of life, said: "Wherefore are we come to these ladies?" Then he said to me: "To the end that they may be worthily served."

And the truth is, that they were met together

here to attend on a gentle lady who was married that day; and therefore, according to the custom of the above-mentioned city, it behoved them to bear her company at her first sitting at table in the house of her new-made husband. So that I, believing to do the pleasure of this friend, determined to stand in company with him at the service of the ladies. And as soon as I had thus resolved, I seemed to feel a wonderful tremor begin in my breast on the left side, and extend suddenly through all the parts of my body. Then I say that, dissembling, I leaned against a painting which ran around the wall of this house, and fearing lest my trembling should be observed by others, I lifted mine eyes, and, looking at the ladies, saw among them the most gentle Beatrice. Then were my spirits so destroyed by the force that Love acquired, on seeing himself in such neighborhood to this most gentle lady, that none remained alive except the spirits of sight, and even these remained outside of their instruments, because Love wished to stand in their most noble place to look upon this marvellous lady. And although I was other than at first, I grieved much for these little spirits, who were lamenting bitterly, and saying, "If he so like a thunderbolt had not smitten us from our place, we might stand to gaze upon the marvel of this lady, as do the others our peers."

I say that many of these ladies, perceiving my transfiguration, began to wonder; and, talking, made a mock of me with this most gentle lady. Thereupon my friend, who in good faith had been deceived, took me by the hand, and, leading me out from the sight of these ladies, asked me what ailed me. Then, having somewhat reposed, and my dead spirits having risen again, and those that were driven out having returned to their possessions, I said to this my friend these words: "I have held my feet on that part of life beyond which no man can go with intent to return."

And leaving him, I returned to the chamber of tears, in which, weeping and ashamed, I said within myself, "If this lady knew my condition, I do not believe that she would thus have made mock of my person; nay, I believe that she would feel much pity therefor." And being in this grief, I resolved to say some words in which, speaking to her, I would explain the cause of my transfigurement, and would say that I know well that it is not known, and that, were it known, I believe that it would move others to pity; and I resolved to say them, desiring that peradventure they might come to her hearing. And then I devised this sonnet: —

With other ladies you make mock of me,
And think not, Lady, of the reason why

So strange a shape I offer to your eye,
Whene'er it hap that I your beauty see.
If this you knew, your pity could not hold
Longer against me its accustomed guise;
For when so near you Love doth me surprise,
He courage takes and such assurance bold,
He smites among my spirits chilled with fear,
And some he slays, and some he doth expel,
So he alone remains to look on you;
Hence I another's form am changed into,
Yet not so changed but even then full well
The grievous cries of those expelled I hear.

This sonnet I do not divide into parts, because the division is made only for the sake of disclosing the meaning of the thing divided; therefore, since, through what has been said of its occasion, it has been made sufficiently plain, there is no need of division. It is true that among the words whereby the occasion of this sonnet is set forth, certain ambiguous words are found; namely, when I say that Love slays all my spirits, and only those of vision remain alive, and even they outside of their instruments. And this ambiguity it were impossible to solve to one who is not in like degree the liegeman of Love; and to such as are so, that is already plain which would solve these ambiguous words; and therefore it is not well for me to explain this ambiguousness, since my speech would be vain or superfluous.

XV.

After this strange transfiguration, a strong thought came to me which seldom left me, nay, rather continually recurred to me, and held this discourse with me: "Since thou presentest so contemptible an appearance when thou art near this lady, why then seekest thou to see her? Behold, if she were to ask thee this, what wouldst thou have to answer? supposing that all thy faculties were free, so that thou couldst answer her." And to this another humble thought replied, and said: "If I lost not my faculties and were free so that I could answer, I should say to her, that so soon as I picture to myself her marvellous beauty, so soon a desire to see her comes to me, which is of such great virtue that it slays and destroys in my memory that which might rise against it; and therefore past sufferings hold me not back from seeking the sight of her." Wherefore, moved by such thoughts, I resolved to say certain words, in which, excusing myself to her from blame on this account, I would also set down what befell me in her presence; and I devised this sonnet: —

That which opposeth in my mind doth die
Whene'er I come to see you, beauteous Joy!
And I hear Love say, when to you I 'm nigh,
"Begone, if death be unto thee annoy."

My face the color of my heart displays,
  Which, fainting, any chance support doth seek ;
  And as I tremble in my drunken daze,
  "Die ! die !" the very stones appear to shriek.
He who may then behold me doeth ill,
  If my affrighted soul he comfort not,
  Showing at least that me he pitieth,
Through that compassion which your scorn doth kill,
  And which is by the lifeless look begot
  Of eyes which have a longing for their death.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I tell the reason why I abstain not from seeking the presence of this lady ; in the second, I tell that which befalls me when I draw nigh to her, and this part begins here : "And I hear Love." *And this second part is also divided into five, according to the five different facts related ; for in the first I tell that which Love, counselled by the reason, says to me when I am near her ; in the second, I set forth the state of my heart by the example of my face ; in the third, I tell how every reliance fails me ; in the fourth, I say that he sins who shows not pity for me, inasmuch as this would be some comfort to me ; in the last, I tell why others ought to have pity, namely, because of the piteous look which comes into my eyes, which piteous look is destroyed, that is, is not apparent unto others, on account of the derision of this lady which draws to the*

like disposition those who perchance might see this woe. The second part begins here: "My face;" *the third*, "And as I tremble;" *the fourth*, "He who may then;" *the fifth*, "Through that compassion."

XVI.

After I had devised this sonnet, a wish moved me to say also some words in which I would tell four things further in regard to my state, which it seemed to me had not yet been made manifest by me. The first of which is, that ofttimes I grieved when my memory excited my fancy to imagine what Love did to me; the second is, that ofttimes Love assailed me on a sudden with such force that naught remained alive in me save a thought which spoke of my lady; the third is, that, when this onset of Love thus attacked me, I went, almost quite without color, to look on this lady, believing that the sight of her would be my defence from this attack, forgetting that which befell me in approaching gentleness so great; the fourth is, how this sight not only defended me not, but finally discomfited my little remaining life. And therefore I devised this sonnet: —

The dark condition Love doth on me lay
Many a time occurs unto my thought,
And then comes pity, so that oft I say,
Ah me! to such a pass was man e'er brought?

For on a sudden Love with me doth strive,
So that my life almost abandons me ;
One spirit only doth escape alive,
And that remains because it speaks of thee.
Then to mine aid I summon up my strength,
And so, all pale, and empty of defence,
I seek thy sight, thinking to be made whole ;
And if to look I lift mine eyes at length,
Within my heart an earthquake doth commence,
Which from my pulses driveth out the soul.

This sonnet is divided into four parts, inasmuch as four things are related in it; and since these are spoken of above, I concern myself only to distinguish the parts by their beginnings: wherefore I say that the second part begins here: "For on a sudden;" *the third, here:* "Then to mine aid;" *the fourth:* "And if to look."

XVII.

After I had devised these three sonnets, in which I had spoken to this lady, since they left little of my condition untold, thinking to be silent and to say no more of this, because it seemed to me that I had sufficiently disclosed myself, although ever afterwards I should abstain from addressing her, it behoved me to take up a new theme, and one more noble than the foregoing. And because the occasion of the new theme is pleasant to hear, I will tell it as briefly as I can.

XVIII.

Inasmuch as through my looks many persons had learned the secret of my heart, certain ladies who were met together, taking pleasure in one another's company, were well acquainted with my heart, because each of them had witnessed many of my discomfitures. And I, passing near them, as chance led me, was called by one of these gentle ladies; and she who had called me was a lady of very pleasing speech; so that, when I drew nigh to them, and saw plainly that my most gentle lady was not among them, reassuring myself, I saluted them, and asked what might be their pleasure. The ladies were many, and certain of them were laughing together. There were others who were looking at me, awaiting what I might say. There were others who were talking together, one of whom, turning her eyes toward me, and calling me by name, said these words: "To what end lovest thou this thy lady, since thou canst not sustain her presence? Tell it to us, for surely the end of such a love must be most strange." And when she had said these words to me, not only she, but all the others, began to await with their look my reply. Then I said to them these words: "My ladies, the end of my love was formerly the salutation of this lady of whom you perchance are

thinking, and in that dwelt the beatitude which was the end of all my desires. But since it has pleased her to deny it to me, my lord Love, through his grace, has placed all my beatitude in that which cannot fail me."

Then these ladies began to speak together: and as sometimes we see rain falling mingled with beautiful snow, so it seemed to me I saw their words issue mingled with sighs. And after they had somewhat spoken among themselves, this lady who had first spoken to me said to me yet these words: "We pray thee that thou tell us wherein consists this beatitude of thine." And I, replying to her, said thus: "In those words which praise my lady." And she replied: "If thou hast told us the truth, those words which thou hast said to her, setting forth thine own condition, must have been composed with other intent."

Then I, thinking on these words, as if ashamed, departed from them, and went saying within myself: "Since there is such beatitude in those words which praise my lady, why has my speech been of aught else?" And therefore I resolved always henceforth to take for theme of my speech that which should be the praise of this most gentle one. And thinking much on this, I seemed to myself to have undertaken a theme too lofty for me, so that I dared not to begin; and

thus I tarried some days with desire to speak, and with fear of beginning.

XIX.

Then it came to pass that, walking on a road alongside of which was flowing a very clear stream, so great a desire to say somewhat in verse came upon me, that I began to consider the method I should observe; and I thought that to speak of her would not be becoming unless I were to speak to ladies in the second person; and not to every lady, but only to those who are gentle, and are not women merely. Then I say that my tongue spoke as if moved of its own accord, and said, *Ladies that have intelligence of Love.* These words I laid up in my mind with great joy, thinking to take them for my beginning; wherefore then, having returned to the above-mentioned city, after some days of thought I began a canzone with this beginning, arranged in the mode which will be seen below in its division.

Ladies that have intelligence of Love,
I of my lady wish with you to speak;
Not that I can believe to end her praise,
But to discourse that I may ease my mind.
I say that when I think upon her worth,
So sweet doth Love make himself feel to me,

That if I then should lose not hardihood,
Speaking, I should enamour all mankind.
And I wish not so loftily to speak
As to become, through fear of failure, vile ;
But of her gentle nature I will treat
In manner light compared with her desert,
Ye loving dames and damosels, with you,
For 't is not thing of which to speak to others.

An angel crieth in the mind divine,
And saith : " O Sire, on earth is to be seen
A miracle in action, that proceeds
From out a soul which far as here doth shine.
Heaven, which hath not any other defect
Save want of her, demands her of its Lord,
And every Saint doth for this favor beg."
Only Compassion our part defendeth ;
And thus speaks God, who of my lady thinks :
" O my elect, now suffer ye in peace
That, while it pleaseth me, your hope abide
There, where is one who dreads the loss of her ;
And who shall say in hell to the foredoomed,
'I have beheld the hope of those in bliss.' "

My lady is desired in highest heaven ;
Now will I of her virtue make you know.
I say : Whoso would seem a gentle dame
Should go with her ; for when she goes her way
Love casts a frost upon all caitiff hearts,
So that their every thought doth freeze and perish.
And who can bear to stay on her to look
Will noble thing become, or else will die.
And when one finds that he may worthy be
To look on her, he doth his virtue prove ;

For that arrives to him which gives him health,
And humbles him till he forgets all wrong.
Yet hath God given her for greater grace,
That who hath spoke with her cannot end ill.
Love saith concerning her: "How can it be
That mortal thing be thus adorned, and pure?"
Then, gazing on her, to himself he swears
That God in her a new thing means to make.
Color of pearl so clothes her as doth best
Become a lady, nowise in excess.
Whate'er of good Nature can make she is,
And by her pattern beauty tries itself.
From out her eyes, howe'er she moveth them,
Spirits inflamed of love go forth, which strike
The eyes of him who then may look on them,
And enter so that each doth find the heart.
Love you behold depicted in her smile,
Whereon no one can look with steadfast gaze.
I know, Canzonè, thou wilt go to speak
With many ladies, when I send thee forth.
And now I bid thee, having bred thee up
As young and simple daughter unto Love,
That where thou comest thou shouldst praying say
"Direct me on my way, for I am sent
To her with praise of whom I am adorned."
And if thou wishest not to go in vain,
Make thou no stay where villain folk may be;
Endeavor, if thou mayst, to be acquaint
Only with lady or with courteous man,
Who thee shall guide along the quickest way.
Thou wilt find Love in company with her;
Commend me to him as behoveth thee.

In order that this canzone may be better understood, I shall divide it more elaborately than the other preceding things, and therefore I make of it three parts. The first part is a proem to the words which follow; the second is the subject treated of; the third is, as it were, a handmaid to the words which precede. The second begins here: "An angel crieth;" *the third here:* "I know, Canzonè." *The first part is divided into four; in the first, I tell to whom I wish to speak of my lady, and wherefore I wish to speak; in the second, I tell what she seems to myself, when I think upon her worth, and how I would speak if I lost not hardihood; in the third, I tell how I think to speak in order that I may not be hindered by faintheartedness; in the fourth, repeating yet once more to whom I intend to speak, I tell the reason why I speak to them. The second begins here:* "I say;" *the third, here:* "And I wish not;" *the fourth here:* "Ye loving dames."

Then when I say, "An angel crieth," *I begin to treat of this lady, and this part is divided into two; in the first, I tell what is comprehended of her in heaven; in the second, I tell what is comprehended of her on earth, — here:* "My lady is desired."

This second part is divided into two; for in

the first I speak of her in respect of the nobility of her soul, recounting some of the virtues which proceed from her soul; in the second, I speak of her in respect of the nobility of her body, recounting some of her beauties, — here: "Love saith concerning her." *This second part is divided into two; for in the first I speak of some of the beauties which belong to her whole person; in the second, I speak of some of the beauties which belong to special parts of her person, — here:* "From out her eyes." *This second part is divided into two; for in one I speak of the eyes which are the beginning of Love; in the second, I speak of the mouth which is the end of Love. And in order that every evil thought may be removed hence, let him who reads remember what is written above, that the salutation of this lady, which was an action of her mouth, was the end of my desires so long as I was able to receive it.*

Then when I say, "I know, Canzonè," *I add a stanza, as if for a handmaid to the others, in which I tell what I desire of this my canzone. And since this last part is easy to be understood, I do not trouble myself with more divisions.*

I say, indeed, that to make the meaning of this canzone more clear, it might be needful to employ more minute divisions; but nevertheless it will not displease me that he who has not wit enough

to understand it by means of those already made should let it alone; for surely I fear I have communicated its meaning to too many even through these divisions which have been made, if it should happen that many should hear it.

XX.

After this canzone had been somewhat divulged to the world, inasmuch as one of my friends had heard it, a desire moved him to beg me that I should tell him what Love is, entertaining perhaps through the words he had heard a hope of me beyond my desert. Wherefore I, thinking that after such a treatise it were beautiful to treat somewhat of Love, and thinking that my friend was to be served, resolved to speak words in which I would treat of Love, and then I devised this sonnet: —

Love is but one thing with the gentle heart,
As in the saying of the sage we find;
Thus one from other cannot be apart,
More than the reason from the reasoning mind.
When Nature amorous becomes, she makes
Love then her Lord, the heart his dwelling-place,
Within which, sleeping, his repose he takes,
Sometimes for brief, and sometimes for long space.
Beauty in lady sage doth then appear
Which pleaseth so the eyes, that in the heart
Desire for the pleasing thing hath birth;

And sometimes it so long abideth there,
It makes Love's spirit wide awake to start:
The like in lady doth a man of worth.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I tell of him in respect of what he is potentially; in the second, I tell of him in respect to his potentiality being brought into act. The second begins here: "Beauty in lady sage." *The first is divided into two; in the first, I tell in what subject this potentiality exists; in the second, I tell how this subject and this potentiality are brought together into being, and how one is related to the other, as form to matter. The second begins here:* "When Nature." *Then, when I say:* "Beauty in lady," *I tell how this potentiality is brought into act; and first, how it is brought in man, then, how it is brought in woman, — here:* "The like in lady."

XXI.

After I had treated of Love in the above rhyme, the will came to me to speak further in praise of this most gentle lady words by which I would show how this Love is awakened by her, and how she not only awakens him there where he is sleeping, but there where he is not potentially she, marvellously working, makes him come; and I devised then this sonnet: —

Within her eyes my lady beareth Love,
So that whom she regards is gentle made;
All toward her turn, where'er her steps are stayed,
And whom she greets, his heart doth trembling move;
So that with face cast down, all pale to view,
For every fault of his he then doth sigh;
Anger and pride away before her fly: —
Assist me, dames, to pay her honor due.
All sweetness truly, every humble thought,
The heart of him who hears her speak doth hold;
Whence he is blessed who hath seen her erewhile.
What seems she when a little she doth smile
Cannot be kept in mind, cannot be told,
Such strange and gentle miracle is wrought.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first, I tell how this lady reduces this potentiality into act, as respects that most noble part, her eyes; and in the third, I tell how this same thing is effected as respects that most noble part, her mouth. And between the first and the third is a little part, which beseeches aid, as it were, for the preceding part and for the following, and begins here: "Assist me, dames." *The third begins here:* "All sweetness." *The first is divided into three; for in the first I tell how she with power makes gentle that which she looks upon; and this is as much as to say that she brings Love potentially there where he is not. In the second, I tell how she brings Love into act in the*

hearts of all those upon whom she looks. In the third, I tell that which she then effects with power in their hearts. The second begins, "All toward;" *the third,* "And whom she greets."

When, afterward, I say, "Assist me, dames," *I indicate to whom it is my intention to speak, calling upon these ladies to aid me to pay her honor. Then, when I say,* "All sweetness," *I tell the same thing as has been said in the first part, according to two acts of her mouth, one of which is her most sweet speech, and the other her marvellous smile, except that I do not tell of this last how it works in the hearts of others, because the memory cannot retain it, nor its effects.*

XXII.

Not many days had passed after this, when it pleased the Lord of Glory, who refused not death for himself, that he who had been the begetter of such a marvel as this most noble Beatrice was seen to be, departing from this life, should go verily unto the eternal glory. Wherefore, inasmuch as such a departure is grievous to those who remain, and have been friends of him who is gone, — and there is no friendship so intimate as that of a good father with a good child, and of a good child with a good father; and this lady had been of the

highest degree of goodness, and her father, as is believed by many, and is true, had been good in a high degree, — it is plain that this lady was most bitterly full of grief.

And inasmuch as, according to the custom of the above-mentioned city, ladies assemble with ladies, and men with men, in such affliction, many ladies assembled where this Beatrice was weeping piteously. Wherefore, seeing certain of them returning from her, I heard them speak of this most gentle lady, how she was lamenting. Among their words I heard how they said: "Truly, she so weeps that whoever should behold her must die of pity." Then these ladies passed on; and I remained in such grief that some tears bathed my face, so that, often putting my hands before mine eyes, I covered it. And had it not been that I expected to hear further of her, for I was in a place where most of the ladies who came from her passed by, I should have hidden myself as soon as the tears had assailed me.

And, therefore, still tarrying in the same place, more ladies passed near me, who went along talking together, and saying: "Who of us should ever be joyful, since we have heard this lady speak so piteously?" After these, others passed, who said, as they went by: "This one who is here is weeping neither more nor less than if he had seen her as

we have." And then others said of me: "Behold, this man is become such that he seems not himself." And thus these ladies passing by, I heard speech of her and of myself after this fashion which has been told.

Wherefore, afterwards musing, I resolved to speak words in verse, inasmuch as I had fit occasion to speak, in which I would include all that I had heard from these ladies. And since I would willingly have questioned them, had it not been for blame to me, I treated my theme as if I had questioned them, and they had replied to me. And I made two sonnets; and in the first I question, in the way in which the desire came to me to question; in the other, I tell their answer, taking that which I heard from them as if they had said it in reply to me. And I began the first, "*Ye who a semblance;*" the second, "*Art thou then he.*"

Ye who a semblance so dejected bear,
And who with eyes cast down your trouble show,
Whence do ye come, that thus your color now
Appears like that which pity's self doth wear?
Our gentle lady truly have ye seen,
Bathing her face with tears of loving woe?
Tell me, ye ladies; my heart tells me so,
Since I behold you going with grave mien.
And if ye come from sight of grief so great,
Be pleased to stay a little here with me,
And hide not from me what may be her state.

For in your eyes such trace of tears I see,
And ye return with such a mournful gait,
That my heart trembles, thus beholding ye.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I call upon and ask these ladies if they come from her, saying to them that I believe it, because they return as if ennobled. In the second, I pray them to tell me of her; and the second begins here: "And if ye come."

Art thou then he who oft discourse did hold
Of this our lady unto us alone?
Thy voice resembles his indeed in tone,
But thy form seems to us of other mould.
Ah! wherefore weep'st thou so without control,
Thou makest us to feel a pity keen?
And hast thou then, forsooth, her weeping seen,
So thou canst not conceal thy grieving soul?
Leave tears to us, and let us sadly go,
(He doeth ill who seeketh us to aid,)
For we have heard her speak in tearful woe;
And on her face such sorrow is displayed,
That who had wished to gaze upon her so,
Before her would in death be weeping laid.

This sonnet has four parts, according to the four fashions of speech of the ladies for whom I reply. And because these are sufficiently shown above, I do not concern myself to tell the purport of the parts, and therefore I only mark them.

The second begins here: "Ah! wherefore weep'st thou;" *the third:* "Leave tears to us;" *the fourth:* "And on her face."

XXIII.

A few days after this it fell out that a grievous infirmity came upon me in a certain part of my body, from which I suffered for many days most bitter pain, which brought me to such weakness that I was forced to lie as one who cannot move. I say that on the ninth day, feeling almost intolerable pain, a thought came to me which was of my lady. And when I had thought somewhat of her, I returned in thought to my enfeebled life, and seeing how slight was its duration, even were it sound, I began lamenting within myself at such wretchedness. Wherefore, sighing deeply, I said within myself: "It must needs be that the most gentle Beatrice shall at some time die."

And thereupon a strong bewilderment so overcame me, that I closed my eyes, and began to be distracted like a person in a frenzy, and to imagine in this wise: that, at the beginning of the wandering which my fancy made, certain faces of ladies with hair dishevelled appeared to me, and they said to me: "Thou too shalt die." And after these ladies, there appeared to me certain strange

faces, and horrible to behold, which said to me: "Thou art dead."

Thus my fancy beginning to wander, I was brought to such a pass that I knew not where I was; and it seemed to me that I saw ladies with hair dishevelled go by, weeping, marvellously sad; and it seemed to me that I saw the sun grow dark, so that the stars showed themselves of such a color as to make me deem they wept; and it seemed to me that the birds as they flew fell dead, and that there were very great earthquakes. And in this fantasy, marvelling and much afraid, I imagined that a certain friend came to me to say: "Dost thou then not know? thine admirable lady is departed from this world." Then I began to weep very piteously; and wept not only in my imagination, but wept with my eyes, bathing them with real tears.

I imagined that I looked toward heaven, and it seemed to me that I saw a multitude of angels, who were returning upwards, and had before them a little cloud of exceeding whiteness; and it seemed to me that these angels sang gloriously, and the words of their song it seemed to me were these: "*Osanna in excelsis!*" — and aught else meseemed not to hear. Then it seemed to me that the heart wherein was so much love said to me: "True is it that our lady lies dead." And forth-

with it seemed to me that I went to behold the body in which that most noble and blessed soul had dwelt. And so strong was the erring fancy, that it showed to me this lady dead; and it seemed to me that ladies had covered her head with a white veil, and it seemed to me that her face had such an aspect of humility that it seemed to say: "Now do I behold the beginning of peace."

In this imagination there came to me such humility through seeing her, that I called upon Death, and said: "Most sweet Death, come unto me, and be not discourteous to me; for thou ought-est to be gentle, in such place hast thou been. Come then unto me, who greatly desire thee; and thou seest it, for I already wear thy color." And when I had seen all the mournful ministries completed which are wont to be rendered to the bodies of the dead, it seemed to me that I returned to my chamber; and here it seemed to me that I looked toward heaven, and so strong was my imagination, that, weeping, I began to say with my real voice: "O most beautiful soul, how blessed is he who sees thee!" And as I said these words, with a grievous sob of weeping, and called upon Death to come unto me, a young and gentle lady, who was at the side of my bed, believing that my weeping and my words were lamentation on account of the pain of my infirmity, with great fear began to weep.

Wherefore other ladies who were in the chamber became aware that I was weeping, through the tears they saw her shed; wherefore making her, who was connected with me in the nearest kinship, depart from me, they drew towards me to wake me, believing that I had been dreaming, and said to me: "Sleep no more, nor be discomforted." And as they thus spoke to me, the strong fantasy ended at the moment when I was about to say: "O Beatrice, blessed be thou!" And I had already said, "O Beatrice," when, arousing myself, I opened my eyes and saw that I had been deluded. And although I had uttered this name, my voice was so broken by sobs that these ladies had not been able to understand me. And notwithstanding I was sore ashamed, nevertheless, by some admonition of Love, I turned me to them. And when they saw me, they began to say: "He seems far gone:" and to say each to other: "Let us try to comfort him." Thereupon they said many words to comfort me; and then they asked me of what I had been afraid. Wherefore I, being somewhat comforted, and having recognized the falsity of my imagining, replied to them, "I will tell you what has ailed me." Then, beginning at the beginning, I told them even to the end that which I had seen, keeping silent the name of this most gentle lady.

Wherefore afterwards, being healed of this infir-

mity, I resolved to speak concerning that which had befallen me, since it seemed to me that it would be a thing delightful to hear; and so I devised this canzone concerning it: —

A lady, pitiful, and young in years,
Adorned full well with human gentilesse,
Who present was where oft I called on Death,
Seeing my eyes to be filled up of woe,
And hearing the vain words that fell from me,
Was by her fear impelled to weep aloud;
And other ladies who were thus made ware
Of me, through her who with me there was weeping,
Made her to go away,
While they drew near to cause me to awake.
One said: "No longer sleep;"
And one: "Why art thou so discomforted?"
Thereon the novel fantasy I left
In giving utterance to my lady's name.
So mournful was my voice, and broken so
By anguish and by tears, that I alone
The name within my heart did understand.
And thereon, with the look of utter shame,
Which had gained full possession of my face,
Love did compel me unto them to turn.
And such my color was to look upon,
As made these others to discourse of death.
"Ah! let us comfort him,"
One lady to the other humbly prayed;
And oftentimes they said:
"What hast thou seen that thou no strength hast left?"

And when a little I was comforted,
"Ladies," I said, "I will tell it to you.
While I was thinking of my fragile life,
And saw how slight continuance it hath,
Love wept within my heart, where he abides;
Whereby, indeed, my soul was so dismayed,
That then I, sighing, said within my thought:
'Sure it must be my lady too shall die.'
Then into such bewilderment I fell,
I closed my eyes that basely were weighed down;
And consternated so
My spirits were, that each went straying off.
And then imagining,
Bereft of consciousness alike and truth,
Ladies with looks of wrath appeared to me,
Who said to me: 'Thou too shalt die, shalt die.'
Then saw I many fearful things within
The false imagining wherein I lay;
Meseemed to be I know not in what place,
And to see ladies pass dishevelled by,
Some weeping and some uttering laments,
So that the fire of sadness they shot forth.
Then, as it seemed, I by degrees beheld
The sun grow dark, and then the star appear,
And he and she to weep;
The birds in their mid-flight through air fell down,
And the earth seemed to shake;
And I beheld a man pale-faced and hoarse,
Who said: 'What ails thee? Knowst thou not the news?
Dead is thy lady, she that was so fair.'
I raised my eyes which with my tears were bathed,
And saw what seemed to be a rain of manna,—

The Angels, who to heaven were returning,
And had in front of them a little cloud,
Following which, they all 'Hosanna!' sang;
Had they said more, to you I would it tell.
And then Love said: 'No more I hide from thee;
Come thou to see our lady where she lies.'
The false imagining
Conducted me to see my lady dead;
And, as I looked, I saw
That ladies with a veil were covering her;
And she had a humility so true,
It seemed as if she said, 'I am in peace.'
So humble in my sorrow I became,
Seeing in her such humbleness displayed,
That I said: 'Death, thee very sweet I hold;
Thou oughtest now to be a gentle thing,
Since thou within my lady hast abode,
And thou shouldst pity have, and not disdain.
Behold! I am so eager among thine
To be, that I resemble thee in truth.
Come! my heart calleth thee.'
Then I departed, the sad rites complete;
And when I was alone,
Looking unto the realm on high, I said,
'Blessëd is he who sees thee, beauteous soul!'
Ye called me thereupon, thanks be to you."

This canzone has two parts. In the first, I tell, speaking to an undefined person, how I was roused from a vain fantasy by certain ladies, and how I promised them to tell it. In the second, I tell how I told it to them. The second begins

here: "While I was thinking." *The first part is divided into two; in the first, I tell that which certain ladies, and that which one alone, said and did on account of my fantasy, before I had returned to true consciousness; in the second, I tell that which these ladies said to me after I left this frenzy, and this part begins here:* "So mournful was my voice." *Then when I say,* "While I was thinking," *I tell how I told them this my imagination, and of this I make two parts. In the first, I tell this imagination in its order; in the second, telling at what point they called me, I thank them at the close; and this part begins here:* "Ye called me."

XXIV.

After this my vain imagination, it came to pass one day that, as I sat thoughtful in a certain place, I felt a trembling begin in my heart, just as if I had been in the presence of this lady. Then I say that an imagination of Love came to me; for it seemed to me that I saw him coming from that place where my lady dwelt; and it seemed to me that he joyfully said to me in my heart: "Mind thou bless the day on which I took possession of thee, for thou oughtest so to do." And of a truth it seemed to me that my heart was so

gladsome, that it did not seem to me to be my heart, because of its new condition.

And a little after these words which my heart had said to me with the tongue of Love, I saw coming toward me a gentle lady who was famous for her beauty, and who had now long been the lady of him my first friend. And the name of this lady was Joan, but on account of her beauty, as some believe, the name of Primavera [Spring] had been given to her, and thus she was called. And behind her, as I looked, I saw coming the marvellous Beatrice. These ladies passed near me thus one after the other; and it seemed to me that Love spoke to me in my heart, and said: "This first is called Primavera solely because of this coming of to-day; for I moved the giver of the name to call her Primavera, that is to say, *prima verrà* [she will come first] on the day that Beatrice shall show herself after the imagination of her vassal. And if thou wilt further consider her original name, it means the same as Primavera, because her name, Joan, is derived from that John who preceded the true Light, saying, *Ego vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini* [I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord]. And also it seemed to me that after these he said to me other words, namely: "He who should consider subtilely would call that

Beatrice *Love*, because of the great likeness she has to me." Wherefore I, then thinking this over, resolved to write of it in rhyme to my first friend, (keeping silent certain words which it seemed should be kept silent,) for I believed that his heart still admired the beauty of this gentle Primavera. And I devised this sonnet: —

An amorous spirit in my heart that lay
I felt awaken from his slumber there;
And then I saw Love come from far away,
But scarce I knew him, for his joyous air.
"Honor to me," he said, "think now to pay,"
And with his every word did smiles appear.
Then did my Lord a little with me stay,
And from that part wherefrom he came whilere
I Lady Joan and Lady Bicè see,
Unto the place approaching where I was;
One marvel following the other came;
And, as my mind reporteth unto me,
Love said, "This one is Spring, and this, because
She so resembleth me, hath Love for name."

This sonnet has many parts; the first of which tells how I felt the wonted tremor awake in my heart, and how it seemed that Love appeared to me joyous from afar; the second tells how it seemed to me that Love spoke to me in my heart, and what he seemed to me; the third tells how, after he had been thus with me for some time, I

saw and heard certain things. The second part begins here: "Honor to me;" *the third, here:* "Then did my Lord." *The third part is divided into two; in the first, I tell that which I saw; in the second, I tell that which I heard, and it begins:* "Love said."

XXV.

It may be that some person, entitled to have every doubt cleared away, may here be perplexed at my speaking of Love as if it were a thing in itself, and not only an intellectual substance, but as if it were a corporal substance. The which thing, in truth, is false, for Love exists not in itself as substance, but is an accident in substance. And that I speak of it as if it were a body, and, further, as if it were a man, appears from three things which I say of it. I say that I saw it come from far off; wherefore, since *coming* implies a local motion, and, according to the Philosopher, only a body is locally movable in itself, it appears that I assume Love to be a body. I say further of it, that it laughed, and also that it spoke, which things appear to be properties of man, especially the faculty of laughing, and thus it appears that I assume that it is a man.

To explain this matter so far as is meet for the

present occasion, it must first be understood that formerly there were no rhymers of Love in the vulgar tongue, but certain poets in the Latin tongue were rhymers of Love; among us, I mean, although perchance among other people it happened, and still happens that, as in Greece, not the vulgar, but the lettered poets treated of these things. And no great number of years have passed since these poets in the vulgar tongue first appeared; for to write in rhyme in the vulgar is, after a manner, the same thing as to write in verse in Latin. And the proof that it is but a short time is, that, if we undertake to search in the tongue of the *oco*, and in the tongue of the *sì*, we do not find anything written more than a hundred and fifty years before the present time. And the reason why some illiterate persons acquired the fame of skill in writing verse is, that they were, so to speak, the first who wrote in the tongue of the *sì*. And the first who began to write as a poet in the vulgar tongue was moved to do so because he wished to make his words intelligible to a lady who could not easily understand Latin verses. And this is against those who rhyme on any other theme than Love, since this mode of speech was from the beginning invented in order to speak of Love.

It follows that, since a greater license of speech is granted to poets than to writers of prose, and

these writers in rhyme are no other than poets using the vulgar tongue, it is fitting and reasonable that greater license of speech should be permitted to them than to the other writers in the vulgar tongue; hence, if any figure or rhetorical coloring is allowed to poets, it is allowed also to the rhymers. Therefore, if we see that the poets have spoken of inanimate things as if they had sense and reason, and have made them speak together, and not only real things, but also things not real (that is, that they have said of things which have no existence that they speak, and have often made contingent things speak as if they were substances and human beings), it is fitting that the writer in rhyme should do the like, not, indeed, without some reason, but with a reason which it may be possible afterwards to explain in prose.

That the poets have thus spoken as has been said, appears from Virgil, who says that Juno, that is, a goddess hostile to the Trojans, spoke to Æolus, lord of the winds, here, in the first of the Æneid: *Æole, namque tibi, etc.* [Æolus, for to thee, etc.]; and that this lord replied to her, here: *Tuus, O regina, quid optes, etc.* [Thine, O queen, what thou askest, etc.]. In this same poet the inanimate thing speaks to the animate thing, in the third of the Æneid, here: *Dardanidæ duri, etc.* [Ye hardy Trojans, etc.]. In Lucan the animate thing speaks

to the inanimate, here: *Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis* [Much dost thou owe, O Rome, to civic arms]. In Horace a man speaks to his own knowledge as to another person; and not only are they the words of Horace, but he says them as the interpreter of the good Homer, here, in his book on Poetry: *Dic mihi, Musa, virum, etc.* [Tell to me, Muse, of the man, etc.]. In Ovid, Love speaks as if he were a human person, at the beginning of the book of the Remedy for Love, here: *Bella mihi, video, bella parantur, ait* [Wars against me, I see, wars are preparing, he says].

And by this the matter may now be clear to any one who is perplexed in any part of this my little book.

And in order that no uncultured person may derive any over-boldness herefrom, I say, that the poets do not speak thus without reason, and that those who rhyme ought not to speak thus, unless they have some reason for what they say; since it would be a great disgrace to him who should rhyme anything under the garb of a figure or of rhetorical coloring, if afterward, being asked, he should not be able to denude his words of this garb, in such wise that they should have a true meaning. And my first friend and I are well acquainted with those who rhyme thus foolishly.

XXVI.

This most gentle lady, of whom there has been discourse in the preceding words, came into such favor among the people, that, when she passed along the way, persons ran to see her; which gave me wonderful joy. And when she was near any one, such modesty came into his heart that he dared not raise his eyes, or return her salutation; and of this many, as having experienced it, could bear witness for me to whoso might not believe it. She, crowned and clothed with humility, took her way, showing no pride in that which she saw and heard. Many said, when she had passed: "This is not a woman; rather she is one of the most beautiful angels of heaven." And others said: "She is a marvel. Blessed be the Lord who can work thus admirably!" I say that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all pleasantness, that those who looked on her comprehended in themselves a pure and sweet delight, such as they could not after tell in words; nor was there any who might look upon her but that at first he needs must sigh. These and more admirable things proceeded from her admirably and with power. Wherefore I, thinking upon this, desiring to resume the style of her praise, resolved to say words in which I would set forth her admirable and

excellent influences, to the end that not only those who might actually behold her, but also others, should know of her whatever words could tell. Then I devised this sonnet: —

So gentle and so gracious doth appear
My lady when she giveth her salute,
That every tongue becometh, trembling, mute;
Nor do the eyes to look upon her dare.
Although she hears her praises, she doth go
Benignly vested with humility;
And like a thing come down, she seems to be,
From heaven to earth, a miracle to show.
So pleaseth she whoever cometh nigh,
She gives the heart a sweetness through the eyes,
Which none can understand who doth not prove.
And from her countenance there seems to move
A spirit sweet and in Love's very guise,
Who to the soul, in going, sayeth: Sigh!

This sonnet is so easy of understanding, through that which has been told, that it has no need of any division; and therefore, leaving it,

XXVII.

I say that this my lady reached such favor that not only was she honored and praised, but through her were many ladies honored and praised. Wherefore I, seeing this, and wishing to manifest it to whoever saw it not, resolved further to say

words in which this should be set forth; and I devised then this other sonnet, which relates how her virtue wrought in other ladies: —

All welfare hath he perfectly beheld
  Who amid ladies doth my lady see;
  And they who go with her are all compelled
  Grateful to God for this fair grace to be.
Her beauty of such virtue is indeed,
  That it no envy doth in others move;
  Rather she makes them with her to proceed,
  Clothed on with gentleness and faith and love.
Her sight creates in all humility,
  And maketh not herself to please alone,
  But each gains honor who to her is nigh.
So gentle in her every act is she,
  That she can be recalled to mind by none
  Who doth not, in Love's very sweetness, sigh.

This sonnet has three parts: in the first, I tell among what people this lady appeared most admirable; in the second, I tell how gracious was her company; in the third, I tell of those things which she wrought with power in others. The second begins here: "And they who go;" *the third, here:* "Her beauty of such virtue." *This last part is divided into three: in the first, I tell that which she wrought in ladies, namely, as regards themselves; in the second, I tell that which she wrought in them in respect to others; in the*

third, I tell how she wrought not only in ladies, but in all persons, and how she marvellously wrought not only in presence, but also in memory. The second begins here: "Her sight;" *the third, here:* "So gentle."

XXVIII.

After this I began to think one day upon what I had said of my lady, that is, in these two preceding sonnets; and seeing in my thought that I had not spoken of that which at the present time she wrought in me, it seemed to me that I had spoken defectively; and therefore I resolved to say words in which I would tell how I seemed to myself to be disposed to her influence, and how her virtue wrought in me. And not believing that I could relate this in the brevity of a sonnet, I began then a canzone which begins: —

So long hath Love retained me at his hest,
And to his sway hath so accustomed me,
That as at first he cruel used to be,
So in my heart he now doth sweetly rest.
Thus when by him my strength is dispossessed,
So that the spirits seem away to flee,
My frail soul feels such sweetness verily,
That with it pallor doth my face invest.
Then Love in me doth with such power prevail,
He makes my sighs in words to take their way;
And they go forth to pray

My lady that she give me greater hale.
Where'er she sees me, this to me occurs ;
Nor can it be believed what humbleness is hers.

XXIX.

Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo ! facta est quasi vidua domina gentium [How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! How is she become as a widow ! she that was great among the nations].

I was yet full of the design of this canzone, and had completed this above-written stanza thereof, when the Lord of Justice called this most gentle one to glory, under the banner of that holy Queen Mary, whose name was ever spoken with greatest reverence by this blessed Beatrice.

And although perchance it might be pleasing, were I now to treat somewhat of her departure from us, it is not my intention to treat of it here, for three reasons. The first is, that it is no part of the present design, if we consider the proem which precedes this little book. The second is, that, supposing it did belong to the present design, still my pen would not be sufficient to treat thereof as were meet. The third is, that, supposing both the one and the other, it is not becoming in me to

treat thereof, since, in so doing, it would be needful for me to praise myself, — a thing altogether blameworthy in whosoever does it, — and therefore I leave this theme to some other interpreter.

Nevertheless, since the number nine has often found place among the preceding words, which it seems cannot be without some reason, and in her departure this number seems to have occupied a large place, it is befitting to say something on this point, inasmuch as it seems to befit my design. Wherefore I will first tell how it had place in her departure, and then I will assign some reason wherefore this number was so friendly to her.

XXX.

I say that, according to the mode of reckoning in Arabia, her most noble soul departed in the first hour of the ninth day of the month; and, according to the reckoning in Syria, she departed in the ninth month of the year, since the first month there is Tisrin, which with us is October. And according to our reckoning, she departed in that year of our indiction, that is, of the years of the Lord, in which the perfect number was completed for the ninth time in that century in which she had been set in this world: and she was of the Christians of the thirteenth century.

One reason why this number was so friendly to her may be this: since, according to Ptolemy and according to the Christian truth, there are nine heavens which move, and, according to the common astrological opinion, the said heavens work effects here below according to their respective positions, this number was her friend to the end that it might be understood that at her generation all the nine movable heavens were in most perfect relation. This is one reason thereof; but considering more subtilely and according to the infallible truth, this number was she herself; I mean by similitude, and I intend it thus: the number three is the root of nine, for, without any other number, multiplied by itself it makes nine, as we see plainly that three times three make nine. Therefore, since three is the factor by itself of nine, and the Author of miracles by himself is three, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are three and one, this lady was accompanied by the number nine, that it might be understood that she was a nine, that is, a miracle, whose only root is the marvellous Trinity. Perchance even a more subtile reason might be seen herein by a more subtile person; but this is that which I see for it, and which best pleases me.

XXXI.

After the most gentle lady had departed from this world, all the above-mentioned city remained as if a widow, despoiled of every dignity, wherefore I, still weeping in this desolate city, wrote to the chief personages of the land somewhat of its condition, taking that beginning of Jeremiah the prophet, *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!* [How doth the city sit solitary!] And this I tell in order that others may not wonder why I have cited it above, as if for an entrance to the new theme that comes after. And if any one should choose to blame me because I do not write here the words which follow those cited, my excuse is, that from the first it was my design to write nothing except in the vulgar tongue; wherefore, since the words which follow those which have been cited are all Latin, it would be contrary to my design if I should write them; and I know that he, my first friend, for whom I write this, had a similar understanding, namely, that I should write to him only in the vulgar tongue.

XXXII.

After my eyes had wept for some time, and were so wearied that I could not give vent to my sadness, I thought to try to give vent to it with some

words of grief; and therefore I resolved to make a canzone, in which, lamenting, I would discourse of her for whom such grief was wasting my soul; and I began then, "*The eyes that grieve*," etc.

In order that this canzone may seem to remain the more a widow after its end, I will divide it before I write it out; and this mode I shall follow henceforth. I say that this poor little canzone has three parts: the first is the proem; in the second, I discourse of her; in the third, I speak pitifully to the canzone. The second begins here: "To the high heaven;" *the third, here:* "Sad song of mine." *The first is divided into three: in the first, I tell wherefore I am moved to speak; in the second, I tell to whom I wish to speak; in the third, I tell of whom I wish to speak. The second begins here:* "And since I do remember." *The third, here:* "And then, lamenting." *Then when I say,* "To the high heaven hath Beatrice gone," *I discourse of her; and of this I make two parts. First, I tell the reason wherefore she was taken from us; then I tell how others mourn her departure; and this part begins here:* "Departed from." *This part is divided into three: in the first, I tell who does not mourn for her; in the second, I tell who mourns for her; in the third, I tell of my own condition. The second begins here:* "But he

hath grief and woe;" *the third*, "Great anguish." *Then when I say*, "Sad song of mine," *I speak to this my canzone, pointing out to it the ladies to whom it is to go, and with whom it is to stay.*

The eyes that grieve with pity for the heart
Have of their weeping borne the penalty,
So that they now remain as if subdued.
Wherefore if I would to the grief give vent,
Which by degrees conducts me unto death,
Me it behoves to tell my woe in speech.
And since I do remember that I spoke
Of her, my lady, while she was alive,
Ye gentle ladies, willingly with you,
I will not speak of her,
Save only to a lady's gentle heart.
And then, lamenting, I will tell of her,
That she to heaven suddenly hath gone,
And hath left Love behind in grief with me.
To the high heaven hath Beatrice gone,
Unto that realm where peace the angels have,
And dwells with them; you, ladies, hath she left.
No quality of cold 't was took her there,
Nor yet of heat, such as affecteth others,
But 't was her great benignity alone.
Because the light of her humility
Passed through the heavens with power so great,
It made to marvel the Eternal Lord;
So that a sweet desire
Upon Him came to summon such salvation;
And from below He made her come to Him,
Because He saw that this distressful life
Unworthy was of such a gentle thing.

Departed from her person beautiful,
The gentle soul replete with every grace
Now dwelleth glorious in a fit abode.
Who weeps her not when he doth speak of her
Hath heart of stone so vile and so perverse
Spirit benign can never enter there.
Nor is there wit so high of villain heart
That aught concerning her it can conceive,
Therefore to it comes not the wish to weep.
But he hath grief and woe,
With sighing and with weeping unto death,
And of all comfort is his soul bereft,
Who sometimes in his thought considereth
What she was, and how from us she is taken.
Great anguish do my sighs give unto me,
Whene'er my thought unto my heavy mind
Doth bring her to me who hath cleft my heart.
And thinking oftentimes concerning death,
There comes to me so sweet desire therefor
That it transmutes the color in my face.
When this imagination holds me fixed,
Such pain assaileth me on every side,
That then I tremble with the woe I feel ;
And such I do become
That from the people shame takes me away :
Then, alone, weeping, I lamenting call
On Beatrice, and say : " Art thou, then, dead ? "
And while I call her I am comforted.
The tears of grief, and sighs of agony,
Lay waste my heart whene'er I am alone,
So he would sorrow for it who might see.
And what indeed my life hath been since she,
My lady, to the new world went away,

No tongue there is that could know how to tell.
And therefore, ladies mine, e'en though I wished,
I could not truly tell you what I am.
To me this bitter life such travail brings,
And it is so abased,
That every man who sees my deathlike look
Appears to me to say, "I cast thee off."
But what I am, that doth my lady see,
And thereof I yet hope reward from her.
Sad song of mine, now weeping go thy way,
And find again the dames and damosels
To whom thy sisters all
Were wont to be the bearers of delight;
And thou who art the daughter of despair,
Go forth disconsolate to dwell with them.

XXXIII.

After this canzone was devised, there came to me one who, according to the degrees of friendship, was my friend next in order after the first; and he was so near in blood to this lady in glory that there was none nearer. And after talking with me, he prayed me to write for him something on a lady who was dead; and he dissembled his words, so that it might seem that he was speaking of another lady who had lately died; but I, aware that he spake only of that blessed one, told him I would do that which his prayer begged of me. Wherefore, after thinking thereupon, I resolved to

make a sonnet in which I would somewhat bewail myself, and to give it to this my friend, that it might seem that I had made it for him; and I devised then this sonnet which begins: "*To hearken now*," etc.

This sonnet has two parts: in the first, I call upon the liegemen of Love to hearken to me; in the second, I describe my wretched condition. The second begins here: "Sighs which their way."

To hearken now unto my sighs come ye,
O gentle hearts! for pity wills it so;—
Sighs, which their way disconsolately go,
And were they not, I dead of grief should be:
Because my eyes would debtors be to me
For vastly more than they could ever pay,—
To weep, alas! my lady in such way,
That, weeping her, my heart relieved might be.
Oft you shall hear them calling unto her,
My gentle lady, who from us is gone
Unto the world deserving of her worth;
And then, in scorn of this life, making moan,
As though the grieving soul itself they were,
Abandoned by its welfare upon earth.

XXXIV.

After I had devised this sonnet, reflecting who he was to whom I intended to give it as if made

for him, I saw that the service appeared to me poor and bare for a person so close akin to this lady in glory. And therefore, before I gave him the above-written sonnet, I composed two stanzas of a canzone, the one really for him, and the other for myself; although both the one and the other may appear to him who does not regard subtilely as if written for one person. But he who looks at them subtilely sees well that different persons speak; in that the one does not call her his lady, and the other does so, as is plainly apparent. This canzone and this sonnet I gave to him, saying that I had made them for him alone.

The canzone begins, "As often as," *and has two parts. In one, that is, in the first stanza, this my dear friend, her kinsman, bewails himself; in the other, I bewail myself, that is, in the second stanza, which begins* "And there is intermingled." *And thus it appears that in this canzone two persons bewail themselves, one of whom bewails himself as a brother, the other as a vassal.*

As often as, alas! I call to mind
That I can nevermore
The lady see for whom thus sad I go,
My grieving mind doth cause so great a grief
To gather round my heart,
I say, "My soul, why goest thou not away,

Seeing the torments thou wilt have to bear,
In this world so molestful now to thee,
Make me foreboding with a heavy fear?"
And therefore upon Death
I call, as to my sweet and soft repose,
And say, "Come thou to me," with such desire
That I am envious of whoever dies.
And there is intermingled with my sighs
A sound of wofulness,
Which evermore goes calling upon Death.
To her were all of my desires turned
When that the lady mine
Was overtaken by her cruelty;
Because the pleasure of her beauteousness,
Taking itself away from out our sight,
Became a spiritual beauty great,
Which through the heaven spreads
A light of love that doth the angels greet,
And makes their high and keen intelligence
To marvel, of such gentleness is she.

XXXV.

On that day on which the year was complete since this lady was made one of the denizens of life eternal, I was seated in a place where, having her in mind, I was drawing an angel upon certain tablets. And while I was drawing it, I turned my eyes and saw at my side men to whom it was meet to do honor. They were looking on what I did, and, as was afterwards told me, they had been

there already some time before I became aware of it. When I saw them I rose, and, saluting them, said, "Another was just now with me, and on that account I was in thought." And when they had gone away, I returned to my work, namely, that of drawing figures of angels; and, while doing this, a thought came to me of saying words in rhyme, as if for an anniversary poem of her, and of addressing those persons who had come to me. And I devised then this sonnet that begins, "*The gentle lady*," the which has two beginnings; and therefore I will divide it according to one and the other.

I say that, according to the first, this sonnet has three parts: in the first, I tell that this lady was already in my memory; in the second, I tell what Love thereupon did to me; in the third, I tell of the effects of Love. The second begins here: "Love, who;" *the third, here:* "Lamenting they from out." *This part is divided into two: in the one, I say that all my sighs went forth speaking; in the other, I tell how some said certain words different from the others. The second begins here:* "But those." *In this same way it is divided according to the other beginning, except that in the first part I tell when this lady had so come to my mind, and this I do not tell in the other.*

FIRST BEGINNING.

The gentle lady to my mind had come,
Who, for the sake of her exceeding worth,
Had by the Lord Most High been ta'en from earth
To that calm heaven where Mary hath her home.

SECOND BEGINNING.

That gentle lady to my mind in thought
Had come, because of whom Love's tears are shed,
Just at the time when, by her influence led,
To see what I was doing ye were brought.
Love, who within my mind did her perceive,
Was wakened up within my wasted heart,
And said unto my sighs, "Go forth! depart!"
Whereon each one in sorrow took its leave.
Lamenting they from out my breast did go,
And uttering a voice that often led
The grievous tears unto my saddened eyes;
But those which issued with the greatest woe,
"O high intelligence!" they, going, said,
"To-day makes up the year since thou to heaven didst rise."

XXXVI.

Some time afterwards, happening to be in a place where I was reminded of the past time, I stood deep in thought, and with such doleful thoughts that they made me exhibit an appearance of terrible distress. Wherefore I, becoming aware of my woe-begone look, lifted up my eyes to see

if any one saw me; and I saw a gentle lady, young and very beautiful, who was looking at me from a window with a face full of compassion, so that all pity seemed gathered in it. Wherefore, since the wretched, when they see the compassion of others for them, are the more readily moved to weep, as if taking pity on themselves, I then felt my eyes begin to desire to weep; and therefore, fearing lest I might display my abject life, I departed from before the eyes of this gentle one; and I said then within me: "It cannot be but that with that compassionate lady should be a most noble love." And therefore I resolved to devise a sonnet in which I would speak to her, and would include all that is narrated in this account. And since this account is manifest enough, I will not divide it.

Mine eyes beheld how you were wont to show
  Great pity on your face, what time your sight
  Fell on the actions and the wretched plight
  To which I ofttimes was reduced by woe.
Then was I ware that you did meditate
  Upon the nature of my darkened years,
  So that within my heart were wakened fears
  Lest that mine eyes should show my low estate.
And then I took myself from you, perceiving
  That tears from out my heart began to move,
  Which by your look had been thus deeply stirred.
Thereon in my sad soul I said this word:

"Ah! surely with that lady is that love
Which maketh me to go about thus grieving."

XXXVII.

It came to pass afterwards that, wherever this lady saw me, she became of a compassionate aspect and of a pallid color, even as that of love; wherefore I was often reminded of my most noble lady, who had ever showed herself to me of a like color. And ofttimes, in truth, not being able to weep, nor to give vent to my sadness, I sought to see this compassionate lady, who seemed by her look to draw the tears out from my eyes. And therefore the will came to me furthermore to say certain words, speaking to her; and I devised this sonnet which begins, "*Color of Love*," and which is plain without division, through the preceding account.

Color of Love and semblance of compassion
Never so wondrously possession took
Of lady's face, through turning oft her look
On gentle eyes and grievous lamentation,
As now, forsooth, of yours they do, whene'er
You see my countenance with grief o'erwrought;
So that through you comes something to my thought
Which, lest it break my heart, I greatly fear.
I have no power to keep my wasted eyes
From looking oft on you, with the desire
That gaineth them to let their tears o'erflow.

And you increase their wish in such a wise
That with the longing they are all on fire,
But how to weep before you do not know.

XXXVIII.

I was brought to such a pass by the sight of this lady, that my eyes began to delight too much in seeing her; whereat I was often angry with myself, and esteemed myself mean enough. And many a time I cursed the vanity of my eyes, and said to them in my thought: "But late ye were wont to make those weep who saw your sad condition, and now it seems that ye wish to forget it by reason of this lady who looks upon you, and who does not look upon you save as she grieves for the lady in glory for whom ye are wont to weep. But whatever ye have power to do, do; for, accursed eyes, very often will I remind you of her; for never, except after death, ought your tears to be stayed." And when I had thus spoken within me to my eyes, very deep and distressful sighs assailed me. And in order that this battle which I had with myself might not remain known only to the wretched one who experienced it, I resolved to make a sonnet, and to include in it this horrible condition; and I devised this which begins, "*The bitter tears.*"

The sonnet has two parts: in the first, I speak to my eyes as my heart spoke within me; in the second, I remove a difficulty, showing who it is that thus speaks; and this part begins here: "Thus saith." *It might indeed receive still further divisions, but this would be needless, since it is clear by reason of the preceding account.*

The bitter tears that shed by you have been,
Ye eyes of mine, so long a season now,
Have made the tears of other folk to flow,
Out of compassion, as yourselves have seen,
That you would this forget, it now appears,
If on my part so traitorous I should be
As not to trouble you continually
With thought of her to whom belong your tears.
Your vanity doth care in me beget,
And so alarms me, that I greatly dread
Sight of a dame who on you turns her eyes.
Never should you, until that ye be dead,
Our gentle lady who is dead forget:
Thus saith my heart, and thereupon it sighs.

XXXIX.

The sight of this lady brought me into so strange a condition, that many a time I thought of her as of a person who had pleased me exceeding much. And I thought of her thus: "This is a gentle, beautiful, young, and discreet lady, and she has

appeared perchance through the will of Love, in order that my life may find repose." And oftentimes I thought more lovingly, so that my heart consented thereto, that is, unto its reasoning. And when it had thus consented, I took thought again, as if moved by the reason, and I said to myself: "Ah! what thought is this which in so vile a way seeks to console me, and scarcely leaves me any other thought?" Then another thought rose up and said: "Now that thou hast been in so great tribulation, why dost thou not wish to withdraw thyself from such bitterness? Thou seest that this is an inspiration which brings the desires of Love before us, and proceeds from a place no less gentle than the eyes of the lady who has shown herself so compassionate unto thee." Wherefore I, having thus ofttimes been at strife within me, wished anew to say some words thereof; and since, in the battle of the thoughts, those had conquered that spoke on her behalf, it seemed to me befitting to address her, and I devised this sonnet which begins, "*A gentle thought;*" and I said *gentle* inasmuch as I was speaking to a gentle lady, for otherwise it was most vile.

In this sonnet I make two parts of myself, according as my thoughts had twofold division. The one part I call heart, *that is, the appetite; the other,* soul, *that is, the reason; and I tell how*

one speaks to the other. And that it is fitting to call the appetite the heart, and the reason the soul, is sufficiently plain to those to whom it pleases me that this should be disclosed. It is true that in the preceding sonnet I take the part of the heart against the eyes, and that seems contrary to what I say in the present; and therefore I say that also there I mean by the heart the appetite, since my desire still to remember me of my most gentle lady was greater than to see this one, although I had had truly some appetite therefor, but it seemed slight; wherefore it appears that the one saying is not contrary to the other.

This sonnet has three parts: in the first, I begin with saying to this lady how my desire turns wholly toward her; in the second, I say how the soul, that is, the reason, speaks to the heart, that is, to the appetite; in the third, I say how this replies. The second begins here: "Who then is this?" *the third, here:* "O saddened soul!"

A gentle thought that of you holds discourse
Cometh now frequently with me to dwell,
And with such sweetness it of Love doth tell,
My heart to yield unto him it doth force.
"Who then is this," the soul saith to the heart,
"Who cometh to bring comfort to our mind,
And who hath virtue of so potent kind,
That other thoughts he maketh to depart?"

"O saddened soul," the heart to her replies,
"This is a little spirit fresh from Love,
And to my presence his desires he brings.
His very life and all his influence move
From out of the compassionating eyes
Of her who sorroweth for our sufferings."

XL.

Against this adversary of the reason there arose one day, about the hour of nones, a strong imagination within me; for I seemed to see this glorified Beatrice in those crimson garments in which she had first appeared to my eyes, and she seemed to me young, of the same age as when I first saw her. Then I began to think of her; and calling her to mind according to the order of the past time, my heart began bitterly to repent of the desire by which it had so vilely allowed itself for some days to be possessed, contrary to the constancy of the reason: and this so wicked desire being expelled, all my thoughts returned to their most gentle Beatrice. And I say that thenceforth I began to think of her with my heart so all ashamed, that oftentimes my sighs manifested it; for almost all of them told, as they went forth, that which was discoursed of in my heart, to wit, the name of that most gentle one, and how she had departed

from us. And many times it came to pass, that some one thought had such anguish in itself that I forgot it and the place where I was. By this rekindling of sighs my tears which had been assuaged were rekindled in such wise that my eyes seemed two things which desired only to weep; and often it happened that through the long continuance of weeping there came a purple color around them, such as is wont to appear after any torment that one may endure; whence it seems that they were worthily rewarded for their vanity, so that from that time forward they could not gaze at any one who might so look at them as to have power to draw them to a like intention. Wherefore I, wishing that this wicked desire and vain temptation should be seen to be destroyed, so that the rhymed words which I had before written should give rise to no question, resolved to make a sonnet in which I would include the purport of this account. And I said then, "*Alas! by force.*"

I said "Alas!" *inasmuch as I was ashamed that my eyes had so gone astray after vanity. I do not divide this sonnet, for its meaning is sufficiently clear.*

Alas! by force of sighs that oft return,
Springing from thoughts which are within my heart,
Mine eyes are conquered, and have lost the art
To look at one whose gaze on them may turn.

And they are such, they two desires appear,
Only to weep, and sorrow to display ;
And ofttimes they lament in such a way
That Love gives them the martyr's crown to wear.
These thoughts and sighs that issue with my breath,
Become within my heart so full of pain
That Love, subdued by woe, falls senseless there ;
For on themselves these grieving ones do bear
That sweet name of my Lady written plain,
And many words relating to her death.

XLI.

After this tribulation it came to pass, at that time when many people were going to see the blessed image which Jesus Christ left to us as the likeness of his most beautiful countenance, which my lady in glory now beholds, that certain pilgrims were passing through a street which is near the middle of that city where the most gentle lady was born, lived, and died; and they were going along, as it seemed to me, very pensive. Wherefore I, thinking on them, said within myself: "These seem to me pilgrims from some far-off region, and I do not believe that they have even heard speak of this lady, and they know nothing of her; nay, their thoughts are rather of other things than of these here; for perchance they are thinking of their distant friends whom we do not know."

Then I said within me: "I know that, if these were from a neighboring land, they would show some sign of trouble as they pass through the midst of the grieving city." Then again I said within me: "If I could hold them awhile, I would indeed make them weep before they should go out from this city; since I would say words which should make whoever might hear them weep."

Wherefore, they having passed out of my sight, I resolved to make a sonnet in which I would set forth that which I had said to myself; and in order that it might appear more piteous, I resolved to say it as if I had spoken to them, and I devised this sonnet which begins, "*O pilgrims.*"

I said pilgrims *in the wide sense of the word: for* pilgrims *may be understood in two senses, in one wide and in one narrow. In the wide, forasmuch as every one is a pilgrim who is away from his native land; in the narrow sense, by pilgrim is meant only he who goes to or returns from the House of St. James. And further it is to be known that the folk who journey on the service of the Most High are distinguished by three terms. Those who go beyond the sea, whence often they bring back the palm, are called* palmers; *those who go to the House of Galicia are called* pilgrims, *because the burial-place of St. James was more distant from his country than that of any*

other of the Apostles; and those are called romers, *who go to Rome, where these whom I call* pilgrims *were going.*

This sonnet is not divided, because it sufficiently declares its own meaning.

O pilgrims, who in pensive mood move slow,
Thinking perchance of those who absent are,
Say, do ye come from folk away so far
As your appearance seems to us to show?
For ye weep not the while ye forward go
Along the middle of the mourning town;
Seeming as persons who have nothing known
Concerning the sad burden of her woe.
If, through your will to hear, awhile ye stay,
Truly my heart with sighs declares to me
That ye shall afterwards depart in tears.
Alas! her Beatrice now lost hath she;
And all the words that one of her may say
Have virtue to make weep whoever hears.

XLII.

After this, two gentle ladies sent to ask me to send to them some of these rhymed words of mine; wherefore I, thinking on their nobleness, resolved to send to them, and to make a new thing which I would send to them with these, in order that I might fulfill their prayers with the more honor. And I devised then a sonnet which relates my

condition, and I sent it to them accompanied by the preceding sonnet, and by another which begins, "*To hearken now.*" The sonnet which I made then is, "*Beyond the sphere,*" etc.

This sonnet has five parts. In the first, I say whither my thought goes, naming it by the name of one of its effects. In the second, I say wherefore it goes on high, namely, who makes it thus to go. In the third, I say what it sees, namely, a lady in honor. And I call it then a pilgrim spirit; *since spiritually it goes on high, and as a pilgrim who is out of his own country. In the fourth, I say how he sees her such, namely, of such quality, that I cannot understand it; that is to say, that my thought rises into the quality of her to a degree that my understanding cannot comprehend it; since our understanding is in regard to those blessed souls as weak as our eye is before the sun; and this the Philosopher says in the second book of his* Metaphysics. *In the fifth, I say that, although I cannot understand there where my thought transports me, namely, to her marvellous quality, at least I understand this, namely, that this my thought is wholly of my lady, for I often hear her name in my thought. And at the end of this fifth part I say* "Ladies dear," *to indicate that it is to ladies that I speak. The second part begins,* "A new Intelligence;"

the third, "When at;" *the fourth*, "He sees her such;" *the fifth*, "But of that gentle one." *It might be divided still more subtilely, and its meaning be more fully set forth, but it can pass with this division, and therefore I do not concern myself to divide it further.*

Beyond the sphere that widest orbit hath
Passeth the sigh which issues from my heart:
A new Intelligence doth Love impart
In tears to him, which leads him on his path.
When at the wished-for place his flight he stays,
A lady he beholds in honor dight,
Who so doth shine that through her splendid light
The pilgrim spirit upon her doth gaze.
He sees her such that his reporting words
To me are dark, his speech so subtile is
Unto the grieving heart which makes him tell.
But of that gentle one he speaks, I wis,
Since oft he Beatrice's name records;
Thus, ladies dear, I understand him well.

XLIII.

After this sonnet, a wonderful vision appeared to me, in which I saw things which made me resolve to speak no more of this blessed one, until I could more worthily treat of her. And to attain to this, I study to the utmost of my power, as she truly knows. So that, if it shall please Him

through whom all things live, that my life be prolonged for some years, I hope to say of her what was never said of any woman.

And then may it please Him who is the Lord of Grace, that my soul may go to behold the glory of its lady, namely, of that blessed Beatrice, who in glory looks upon the face of Him *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus* [who is blessed forever].

ESSAYS.

ESSAYS.

I HAVE not prefixed to my translation a preface or introduction, preferring to let the little book present itself to the reader without help or hindrance. I would have it read as Dante left it. In the essays and notes which follow, I have endeavored to say only what may lead to the appreciation of it, or may remove difficulties in its interpretation. My translation was made when I was a young man, almost forty years ago; I reprint it now, feeling the charm of the original no less in my age than in my youth, and wishing that something of this charm may be felt by those who know the *New Life* only through my version.

July, 1892.

I.

ON THE "NEW LIFE."

The *New Life* is the proper introduction to the *Divine Comedy*. It is the story of the beginning of the love through which, even in Dante's youth, heavenly things were revealed to him, and which in the bitterest

trials of life, — in disappointment, poverty, and exile, — kept his heart fresh with springs of perpetual solace. It was this love which led him through the hard paths of Philosophy and up the steep ascents of Faith, out of Hell and through Purgatory, to the glories of Paradise and the fulfilment of Hope.

The narrative of the *New Life* is quaint, embroidered with conceits, deficient in artistic completeness, but it has the simplicity of youth, the charm of sincerity, the freedom of personal confidence; and so long as there are lovers in the world, and so long as lovers are poets, this first and tenderest love-story of modern literature will be read with appreciation and responsive sympathy.

It is the earliest of Dante's writings, and the most autobiographic of them in form and intention. In it we are brought into intimate personal relations with the poet. He trusts himself to us with full and free confidence; but there is no derogation from becoming manliness in his confessions. He draws the picture of a portion of his youth, and displays its secret emotions; but he does so with no morbid self-consciousness and with no affectation. Part of this simplicity is due, undoubtedly, to the character of the times, part to his own youthfulness, part to downright faith in his own genius. It was the fashion for poets to tell of their loves; in following this fashion, he not only gave utterance to genuine feeling, and claimed his rank among the poets, but also fixed a standard by which the ideal expression of love was thereafter to be measured.

This first essay of his poetic powers rests on the foundation upon which his later life was built. The figure of Beatrice, which appears veiled under the symbolism and indistinct in the bright halo of the allegory of the *Divine Comedy*, takes its place in life and on the earth through the *New Life* as definitely as that of Dante himself. She is no allegorized piece of humanity, no impersonation of attributes, but an actual woman, — beautiful, modest, gentle, with companions only less beautiful than herself, — the most delightful personage in the daily picturesque life of Florence. She is seen smiling and weeping, walking with other fair maidens in the street, praying at the church, merry at festivals, mourning at funerals; and her smiles and tears, her gentleness, her reserve, all the sweet qualities of her life, and the peace of her death, are told of with such tenderness, and purity, and passion, as well as with such truth of poetic imagination, that she remains, and will always remain, the loveliest and most womanly woman of the Middle Ages, — at once absolutely real and truly ideal.

The meaning of the name *La Vita Nuova* has been the subject of animated discussion among the commentators. Literally *The New Life*, it has been questioned whether this phrase meant simply early life, or life made new by the first experience and lasting influence of love. The latter interpretation seems the most appropriate to Dante's turn of mind and to his condition of feeling at the time when the little book appeared. To him it was the record of that life which the presence of Beatrice had made new.

But whatever be the true significance of the title, this *New Life* is full, not only of the youthfulness of its author, but also of the fresh and youthful spirit of the time. Italy, after a long period of childhood, was now becoming possessed of the powers of maturity. Society (to borrow a fine figure from Lamennais), like a river, which, long lost in marshes, had at length regained its channel, after stagnating for centuries, was once more rapidly advancing. Throughout Italy there was a morning freshness, and the thrill and exhilaration of vigorous activity. Her imagination was roused by the revival of ancient and now new learning, by the stories of travellers, by the gains of commerce, by the excitements of religion and the alarms of superstition. She was boastful, jealous, quarrelsome, lavish, magnificent, full of fickleness, — exhibiting on all sides the exuberance, the magnanimity, the folly of youth. After the long winter of the Dark Ages, spring had come in full tide, and the earth was renewing its beauty. And, above all other cities in these days, Florence overflowed with the pride of life. Civil brawls had not yet reduced her to become an easy prey for foreign conquerors or native tyrants. She was famous for wealth, and her spirit had risen with prosperity. Many years before, one of the Provençal Troubadours, writing to his friend in verse, had said: "Friend Gaucelm, if you go to Tuscany, seek a shelter in the noble city of the Florentines, which is named Florence. There all true valor is found; there joy and song and love are perfect and adorned." And if this was true in the earlier years of the thirteenth cen-

tury, it was still truer of its close; for much of early simplicity and purity of manners had disappeared before the increasing luxury and the gathered wealth of the city, — so that gayety and song more than ever abounded. "It is to be noted," says Giovanni Villani, writing of this time, — "it is to be noted that Florence and her citizens were never in a happier condition." The chroniclers tell of constant festivals and celebrations. "In the year 1283, in the month of June, at the feast of St. John, the city of Florence being in a happy and good state of repose, — a tranquil and peaceable state, excellent for merchants and artificers, — there was formed a company of a thousand men or more, all clothed in white dresses, with a leader called the Lord of Love, who devoted themselves to games and sports and dancing, going through the city with trumpets and other instruments of joy and gladness, and feasting often together. And this court lasted for two months, and was the most noble and famous that ever was held in Florence or in all Tuscany, and many gentlemen came to it, and many jongleurs, and all were welcomed and honorably cared for." Every year, the summer was opened with May and June festivals. Florence was rejoicing in abundance and beauty. Nor was it only in passing gayeties that the cheerful and liberal temper of the people was displayed.

The many great works of Art which were begun and carried on to completion at this time show with what large spirit the whole city was inspired, and under what strong influences of public feeling the early life of Dante was led. Civil liberty and strength were producing their

legitimate results. Little republic as she was, Florence was great enough for great undertakings. Never was there such a noble activity within the narrow compass of her walls as from about 1265, when Dante was born, to the end of the century. In these thirty-five years the stout walls and the tall tower of the Bargello were built; the grand foundations of the Palazzo Vecchio and of the vast Duomo were laid, and both in one year; the Baptistery — *il mio bel San Giovanni* — was adorned with a new covering of marble; the churches of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce — the finest churches even now in Florence — were begun and carried far on to completion. Each new work was at once the fruit and the seed of glorious energy.

It would be strange, indeed, if the youthful book of one so sensitive to external influences as Dante did not give evidence of sympathy with such pervading emotion. Only at such a period, when strength of sentiment was finding vent in all manner of free expression, was such a book possible. Confidence, frankness, directness in the rendering of personal feeling, are rare, except in conditions of society when the emotional and creative spirit is stronger than the critical.

The most marked characteristics of art at this time and of poetry, as represented by Dante, were an assertion of independence, and a return to nature as the source not only of inspiration but of truth. The established mannerisms and conventional forms which had shackled genius and restrained imagination yielded to the strong impulse of vigorous and natural life, which

restored truth of feeling and truth of expression to all the arts, and opened the way to achievements which in spiritual significance and in beauty of design have never since been surpassed.

The Italian poets, before Dante, may be broadly divided into two classes. The first was that of the troubadours, who wrote in the Provençal language, and were hardly to be distinguished from their contemporaries of the South of France. They gave expression in their verses to the ideas of love, gallantry, and valor which formed the base of the complex and artificial system of chivalry, repeating one after the other the same fancies and thoughts in similar formulas, without scope or truth of imagination, with rare display of individual feeling, with little regard for nature. Ingenuity is more characteristic of their poetry than sincerity, subtilty more obvious in it than beauty. The second and later class were poets who wrote in the Italian tongue, but still under the influence of the poetic code which had governed the compositions of their Provençal predecessors. Their poetry is, for the most part, a faded copy of an unsubstantial original, — an echo of sounds originally faint. Truth and poetry were effectually divided. In the latter half of the thirteenth century, however, a few poets appeared whose verses give evidence of some native life, and are enlivened by a freer play of fancy and a greater truthfulness of feeling. Guido Guinicelli, who died in 1276, when Dante was eleven years old, and, a little later, Guido Cavalcanti,

and some few others, trusting more than their predecessors to their own inspiration, show themselves as the forerunners of a better day. But as, in painting, Margaritone and Cimabue, standing between the old and the new styles, exhibit rather a vague striving than a fulfilled attainment, so is it with these poets. There is little that is distinctively individual in their sentiment or in the expression of it. Love is still treated mostly as an abstraction, and one poet might adopt another's love-verses with few changes of form so far as any manifest difference of personal feeling is concerned.

Not so with Dante. The *New Life*, although retaining many forms and expressions derived from earlier poets, is his, and could be the work of no other. Nor was he unaware of this difference between himself and those that had gone before him, or ignorant of its nature. Describing himself to Buonagiunta da Lucca in Purgatory, he says: —

"'I am one, who, when Love inspires me, notes; and in that measure which he dictates within, I go revealing.' 'O brother, now I see,' said he, 'the knot which held back the Notary and Guittone and me short of the sweet new style that I hear. I see clearly how your pens go on close following the dictator, which surely befell not with ours. And he who most sets himself to look further sees nothing more between one style and the other.'" (*Purgatory*, xxiv. 55–62.)

As Love was the common theme of the verses from which Buonagiunta drew his contrast, the difference between them lay plainly in sincerity of feeling and truth of expression. The following closer upon the dictates of

his heart was the distinguishing merit of Dante's love poetry over all that had preceded it, and most of what has come after it. There are, however, some among his earlier poems in which the "sweet new style" is scarcely heard; and others, of a later period, in which the customary metaphysical and fanciful subtilties of the elder poets are drawn out to an unwonted fineness. These were concessions to a ruling mode, — concessions the more readily made, because in complete harmony with the strong subtilizing and allegorizing tendencies of Dante's own mind. Still, so far as he adopts the modes of his predecessors in this first book of his, Dante surpasses them all in their own way. He leaves them far behind him, and already sees opening before him new paths which he is to tread alone.

But there is yet another tendency of the times, to which Dante, in his later works, has given the fullest and most characteristic expression, and which exhibits itself curiously in the *New Life*. Corresponding with the new ardor for the arts, and in sympathy with it, was a newly awakened and generally diffused ardor for learning, especially for the various branches of philosophy. Science was leaving the cloister, in which she had sat in dumb solitude, and coming out into the world. But the limits and divisions of knowledge were not firmly marked out. The relations of learning to truth were not clearly understood. The minds of men were, indeed, quickened by a new sense of freedom, and stimulated by a fresh ardor of imagination. New worlds of undiscovered knowledge loomed vaguely along the

horizon. Fancy invaded the domain of philosophy; and the poets disguised the subtleties of metaphysics under the garb of verses of love. To be a proper poet was not only to be a writer of verses, but to be a master of learning. Boccaccio describes Guido Cavalcanti as "one of the best logicians in the world, and a most excellent natural philosopher," but says nothing of his poetry.

Dante, more than any other man of his time, exhibited in himself the general zeal for knowledge. His genius had two distinct and yet often intermingling parts, — the poetic and the scientific. No learning came amiss to him. He was born a student, as he was born a poet: and had he never written a single poem, he would still have been famous as the most profound scholar of his times. Far as he surpassed his contemporaries in poetry, he was also their superior in his mastery of the knowledge of man and of the world. And this double nature of his genius is plainly shown in many parts of the *New Life*. A youthful incapacity to draw clearly the line between the part of the student and the part of the poet is manifest in it. The display of his acquisitions is curiously mingled with the narrative of his emotions. This is not to be charged against him as pedantry. His love of learning partook of the nature of passion; his judgment was not yet able, if indeed it ever became able, to establish a strict division between the abstractions of the intellect and the visions of the imagination. And more than this, his early claim of honor as a poet, especially as a poet in the vulgar tongue,

was to be justified by his possession and exhibition of the fruits of study.

Moreover, the mind of Dante was of a quality which led him to unite learning with poetry in a manner peculiar to himself. He was essentially a mystic. The obscure and hidden side of things was not less present to his imagination than the visible and plain. The range of human capacity in the comprehension of the spiritual world was not then marked by as numerous boundary-stones of failure as now define the way. Impossibilities were sought for with the same confident hope as realities. The alchemists and the astrologers believed in the attainment of results as tangible and real as the gains which travellers brought back from the marvellous and still unachieved East. The mystical properties of numbers, the influence of the stars, the powers of cordials and elixirs, the virtues of precious stones, were received as established facts, and opened long vistas of discovery before the student's eyes. A ring of mystery surrounded the familiar world, and outside the known lands of the earth lay a region unknown except to the fancy, from which strange gales blew and strange clouds floated up. Curiosity and inquiry were stimulated and made earnest by wonder. Wild and fanciful speculations formed the basis of serious and patient studies. Dante, partaking to the full in the eager spirit of the times, sharing all the ardor of the pursuit of knowledge, and with a spiritual insight which led him into regions of mystery where no others ventured, naturally associated the knowledge which opened

the way for him with the poetic imagination which cast light upon it. To him science was but the handmaid of poetry.

Much learning has been expended in the attempt to show that the doctrine of Love, which is displayed in the *New Life*, is derived, more or less directly, from the philosophy of Plato. A certain Platonic form of expression, often covering ideas very far removed from those of Plato, was common to the earlier, colder, and less truthful poets. Some strains of such Platonism, derived from the poems of his predecessors, are perhaps to be found in this first book of Dante's. But there is nothing to show that he had intentionally adopted the teachings of the ancient philosopher. It may well, indeed, be doubted if, at the time of its composition, he had read any of Plato's works. Such Platonism as exists in the *New Life* was of that unconscious kind which is shared by every youth of thoughtful nature and sensitive temperament, who makes of his beloved a type and image of divine beauty, and who through the loveliness of the creature is led up to the perfection of the Creator.

The essential qualities of the *New Life*, those which afford direct illustration of Dante's character, as distinguished from such as may be called youthful, or merely literary, or biographical, correspond in striking measure with those of the *Divine Comedy*. The earthly Beatrice is exalted to the heavenly in the later poem; but the entire purity and intensity of feeling with which she is reverently regarded in the *Divine Comedy* are scarcely less characteristic of the earlier work. The imagination

which makes the unseen seen, and the unreal real, belongs alike to the one and to the other. In his love for the living Beatrice Dante had already foretasted the joys of the eternal world. Her beauty, her grace, her goodness, her gentleness, had even upon earth seemed to him divinely excellent, — types of divine realities. His imagination had beheld a miracle in her. And so when he exalts her in the *Divine Comedy*, — her who had been a simple Florentine maiden, — when by virtue of his personal faith he sets her in glory above the Saints, near to the Most Holy Virgin herself, and represents her as the favored one of the Almighty, — he is but carrying out the fervent conceptions of his *New Life* to their required and true conclusions. In this was Dante's poetic power fully displayed, and in this was the depth, purity, and consistency of his nature revealed, that without incongruity, without any jar of the most delicate harmonies of feeling, he could transform his earthly to a heavenly Love, and make the story of his youth the only fit introduction to a poem "whose subject was man," and whose scene was laid in the terrors and the glories of the eternal world.

The *New Life* is chiefly occupied with a series of visions; the *Divine Comedy* is one long vision. The sympathy with the spirit and impulses of the time, which in the first reveals the youthful impressibility of the poet, in the last discloses itself in maturer forms, in more personal expressions. In the *New Life* it is a sympathy mastering the natural spirit; in the *Divine Comedy* the sympathy is controlled by the force of

established character. The change is that from him who follows to him who commands. It is the privilege of men of genius, not only to give more than others to the world, but also to receive more from it. Through sympathy with the life of nature and of man they enter into possession of themselves. Sympathy, in its full comprehensiveness, is the proof and measure of the strongest individuality. By as much as Dante or Shakespeare entered into and learnt of the hearts of men, by so much was his own nature strengthened and made peculiarly his own. The *New Life* shows the first stages of that sympathetic genius, and gives the first, yet clear indications of that profound intelligence, which find their full manifestation in the *Divine Comedy*.

II.

THE *CONVITO* AND THE *VITA NUOVA*.

The charm of apparent simplicity and sincerity in the *Vita Nuova* is so great, that a reader may feel at first a certain sense of regret, as he gradually discovers that the narrative, while professedly the record of actual experience, is a work of poetic art, of elaborate and highly artificial structure, in which the story is ordered not in literal conformity with fact, but according to an ideal of the imagination; and that its reality does not consist in the exactness of its report of fact, but in the truth of the imaginative conception by which the individual experience is transmuted from prose to poetry. Then as

the reader grows familiar with the little book under this aspect, its higher worth becomes manifest to him, and he finds in it a deeper interest than ever.

But he has another discovery to make. Underneath a part at least of the narrative, which appears so direct and single in its intention, lies concealed a studied allegory. The record of professed fact is in part a fiction invented for the garb of an inner meaning, of which the text gives no hint, and which would hardly have been suspected, certainly never truly interpreted, if Dante himself had not elsewhere revealed it.

This revelation is made in his *Convito* or "Banquet." The *Convito* is an unfinished work composed, and in great part written, during the exile of the poet. Certainly not less, probably much more, than ten years intervened between its composition and that of the *Vita Nuova*. I say composition, rather than writing, for it, like the *New Life*, is made up of poems and of prose written at various times, but brought together finally in the form of a consecutive work.

The *Convito* derives its name of the "Banquet" from its main design, which was that of providing instruction which should be serviceable in the conduct of life for those who had scant opportunities of learning. This Dante proposed to do by means of a series of treatises in the vulgar tongue, and in the form of comments upon canzoni of his own, which, though in appearance poems of love, were in reality poems of morality or philosophy. The method admitted of wide and discursive treatment of multifarious topics. It is only in its relation to the *New Life* that the *Banquet* concerns us here.

Very near the beginning, in the first chapter, Dante says: "If in the present work, which is called the *Banquet*, the discourse be more virile than that of the *New Life*, I do not therefore intend to discredit the latter in any respect, but much more to confirm that work by this, seeing how reasonably it behoves that that should be fervid and impassioned, this temperate and virile. . . . For in the former I spoke at the entrance to my youth, in the latter [I speak], youth being now gone by."

This is, I believe, the only direct reference to the *New Life* in the first treatise or book of the *Banquet;* so that, noting only this intention to confirm the *New Life*, we pass to the second treatise, which is composed of the canzone beginning,

"Ye who, intelligent, the third Heaven move,"

and of the comment upon it. In this canzone the poet, addressing the Intelligences of the Heaven of Venus, tells them of the state to which he has been reduced by the conflict of a new love with his old. It deals with those conditions and experiences of the poet which form the subject of chapters thirty-six to thirty-nine of the *New Life*. Because of its close relation to the narrative in those chapters, and for the better understanding of what follows, I give a translation of it.

Ye who, intelligent, the third Heaven move,[1]
List to the talk within my heart, which seems

[1] "It is to be known that the movers of the Heavens are immaterial existences, namely Intelligences, whom the common people

So strange I cannot unto others tell it.
The Heaven which doth your influence obey,
O gentle creatures, as indeed ye are,
Draws me into the state wherein I am;
And hence it seems that of this life of mine
Speech may be fittingly addressed to you;
Wherefore I pray you, that ye give me heed.
To you will I declare my heart's new plight,
How the sad soul within it doth lament,
And how a spirit counter to her [1] speaks,
Which cometh through the radiance of your star.
Life of my grieving heart was wont to be
A thought of sweetness, which full many a time
To your Lord's feet [2] betook itself away,
Where it in glory did a Lady see,
Of whom so sweetly unto me it spake,
That my soul said: "I fain would thither go."
Now appears one who maketh it [3] to fly,
And lords it with such power over me,
That outwardly my heart its trembling shows.
He makes me on a lady turn my gaze,
And says: "Let him who wisheth health [4] to see
Take care upon this lady's eyes to look,
Unless he fear the agony of sighs."
He finds opposed, so that he slaughters it,
The lowly thought which used to speak to me
About an Angel who in Heaven is crowned.
Then weeps the soul, so grieveth she therefor,
And says: "Oh me, alas! since now is fled
This piteous thought which me hath comforted."

call Angels." (ii. 5.) "The Divine light rays out immediately upon the Intelligences, and is reflected by these Intelligences upon other things." (iii. 14.)

[1] Counter to the soul.
[2] To the feet of God.
[3] The sweet thought.
[4] *Salute*, health, salvation.

Then of my eyes this troubled one [1] doth say:
"Woe worth the hour this lady looked on them!
Why trusted they not me concerning her?
I told them: 'Truly in those eyes of hers
He who my peers doth slay must have his stand.'
And thus to warn them, did avail me naught,
But they would look on her, and I am slain."
"Thou art not slain, but thou bewildered art,
O soul of mine, that thus lamentest thee,"
Says then a gentle little sprite of love;
"For this fair lady, who affects thee thus,
Hath in so great degree transformed thy life,
That thou hast fear, so mean art thou become.
But look how modest and how kind is she,
And in her greatness wise and courteous;
And her thy lady think henceforth to call:
For, if thyself thou cheatest not, thou 'lt see
Adornment of such lofty miracles,
That thereon thou wilt say: 'O Love, true Lord,
Behold thy handmaid; do what pleaseth thee.'"
Canzonè, I believe there will be few
Who clearly do thy meaning understand,
Thy speech so toilsome is and hard to them.
Wherefore, if, peradventure, it should hap
That thou in presence of such persons come
As seem to thee not well acquaint with it,[2]
I pray thee then, beloved new song of mine,
Have comfort in thyself and say to them:
"Take heed, at least, how beautiful I am."

Dante begins his comment upon this canzone by saying that certain writings are to be understood in four senses, and may require an exposition according to each sense. The first is the literal meaning; the second is

[1] The soul. [2] With thy meaning.

the allegorical or real, though hidden significance; the third is the moral, that is, their meaning in its practical application to life; the fourth is the anagogical or supersensual significance, by which things true in a literal sense are shown to have also truth in regard to the supernal things of eternal glory, as when the prophet says that, in the coming out of the people of Israel from Egypt, Judea was made holy and free, which, manifestly true according to the letter, is not less true if spiritually understood of the coming out of the soul from sin, by which it is made free and holy.

The exposition of the literal meaning should precede that of the other meanings, and Dante goes on to set forth, in the second chapter of the Treatise, the literal meaning of the canzone, as follows: "Beginning therefore I say, that after the death of that blessed Beatrice, who lives in Heaven with the Angels, and on earth with my soul, the star of Venus had twice revolved in that circle which makes it appear as evening and as morning star, according to the two different seasons, when that gentle lady of whom I made mention toward the end of the New Life, first appeared before my eyes accompanied by Love, and took some place in my mind.[1]

[1] The date of the first appearance of "the gentle lady," though seemingly fixed by this statement, is uncertain, owing to the fact that one of the terms used by Dante to define it admits of two different interpretations. The revolution of the star of Venus in that circle which makes her appear as evening and as morning star, may mean, according to the Ptolemaic system, her revolution in her epicycle relatively to a fixed direction, which is completed in two hundred and twenty-five days; or, it may mean

"And as I have told in the aforesaid little book, it came to pass more through her gentleness than by my own choice, that I yielded myself to her; for she showed herself filled with such compassion for my widowed life, that the spirits of my eyes became altogether friendly to her, and they presented her in such wise within me

"her revolution relatively to the line passing through the earth to the centre of the epicycle," — a revolution accomplished in five hundred and fifty-four days, in which she returns to the same position in regard to the sun as that from which she started. According as we assume one or the other period, the date of the appearance of the gentle lady, at the end of two revolutions of Venus, would be either fifteen months or very nearly thirty-nine months after the death of Beatrice.

If one or the other of these periods could be determined as the correct interval between the death of Beatrice and the appearance of the compassionate lady, it would help to fix the approximate date of the compiling of the *Vita Nuova*. This would be of interest in Dante's external biography, but it is of slight importance so far as his spiritual biography is concerned. For, as regards the essential experience and development of his spiritual and intellectual nature, it is of little consequence whether the *New Life* were compiled early or late in the last ten years of the thirteenth century.

The subject has been ably discussed by Professor George R. Carpenter in a scholarly and excellent essay on the "*Donna Pietosa*" printed with the Eighth Annual Report of the Dante Society, Cambridge (Mass.), 1889. Mr. Carpenter inclines to adopt the shorter revolution of Venus as that intended by Dante.

I am glad of the opportunity, which the mention of this essay of Mr. Carpenter's affords to me, of expressing my grateful acknowledgment to him for giving me the benefit of his learning and taste in the revision of the proof-sheets of my translation of the *Divine Comedy*.

that my will was freely content to unite itself unto that image. But since love does not spring up and grow great and become perfect all at once, but requires some time and the nourishment of thoughts, especially in case of the existence of contrary thoughts which hinder it, it could not but be that, before this new love could become perfect, there should be many a battle between the thought which nourished it and that which was opposed to it, which, through that glorified Beatrice, still held the citadel of my mind. For the one was continually succored from in front by means of my eyes, and the other from behind by means of my memory; and that which was succored from in front increased every day, which was impossible for the other opposed to it, and in some measure hindered by it from turning back its look.

"Wherefore this appeared to me so wonderful and also hard to bear, that I could not endure it, and, crying out as it were, in order to excuse myself for what seemed to me the lack of fortitude, I addressed my voice to that quarter whence was proceeding the victory of the new thought, which was most powerful, as of celestial power, and I began to say: '*Ye, who, intelligent, the third heaven move.*'"

Here Dante breaks off his narrative, in order to proceed with the literal exposition of the canzone, which, with various digressions, occupies many chapters. He explains that he made his appeal to the Angelic Intelligences of the third Heaven, the Heaven of Venus, because they who, in the order of the Heavenly Hierarchy,

are the Thrones, deriving their nature from the Love of the Holy Spirit, work in accordance with it in the revolution of that Heaven which is filled with Love. In this revolution the Heaven acquires a powerful glow by which the souls on earth are kindled to love, according to their respective dispositions. (ii. 6.)

But his canzone exhibits the contention of two loves within his heart, "and some one may say: 'Since love is the effect of these Intelligences, and that first love of thine was love, even as this later was love, how is it that their power destroys the one and generates the other; seeing that it ought to save the former love, for the reason that every cause loves its effect, and, loving, saves it?' To this question the answer is easy. The effect wrought by these Intelligences is, indeed, Love, as has been said; but since they can save it only in those who are subject to their circulation,[1] they transfer it from an existence which lies outside of their power, to one which lies within it; namely, from the soul departed from this life to that which still dwells here."

It is thus that Dante accounts for the transference of his love from Beatrice to another object of love. Beatrice had gone to the immortal world, far above the influence of the Intelligences of the third Heaven. "But," he continues, "inasmuch as the immortality of the soul is here touched upon, I will make a digression, that I may discourse of it; for discourse of it will be a fair close to speech concerning that living, blessed Beatrice of whom I do not propose to speak further in this

[1] That is, subject to the influence of the sphere which they revolve.

book." The digression ends with the following words: "And I believe, and affirm, and am sure that I shall go to another better world after this, where that lady lives in glory, with whom my mind was enamored when it had the battle." (ii. 9.)

So far, then, the narrative in the *Banquet* conforms in the main with that of the *New Life*. But now, having completed the literal exposition of the canzone, Dante proceeds to the "allegoric and true interpretation."

"And therefore, beginning again at the beginning, I say, that when the first delight of my soul was lost, of which mention has already been made, I remained pierced with such affliction that no comfort availed me. Nevertheless, after some time, my mind, which was endeavoring to heal itself, undertook, since neither my own nor others' consoling availed, to turn to the mode which other comfortless ones had adopted for their consolation. And I set myself to reading that book of Boethius, not known to many, in which he, a prisoner and an exile, had consoled himself. And hearing, moreover, that Tully had written a book in which, treating of friendship, he had introduced words of consolation for Lælius, a most excellent man, on the death of Scipio his friend, I set myself to read that. And although it was difficult for me at first to enter into their meaning, I finally entered into it, so far as my knowledge of Latin and a little of my own genius permitted; through which genius I already, as if in dream, saw many things, as may be seen in the *New Life*. And as it sometimes happens that a man goes seeking silver, and,

beyond his expectation, finds gold, which a hidden occasion affords, not perchance without divine guidance, so I, who was seeking to console myself, found not only relief for my tears, but words of authors, and of knowledge, and of books; reflecting upon which, I came to the conclusion that Philosophy, who was the lady [1] of these authors, this knowledge, and these books, was a supreme thing. And I imagined her as having the features of a gentle lady; and I could not imagine her in any but a compassionate act, wherefore my sense so willingly admired her in truth, that I could hardly turn it from her. And after this imagination I began to go there where she displayed herself truly, that is to say, to the school of the religious, and to the disputations of the philosophers, so that in a short time, perhaps in thirty months, I began to feel so much of her sweetness that the love of her chased away and destroyed every other thought. Wherefore I, feeling myself lifted from the thought of my first love to the virtue of this, wondering as it were in myself, opened my mouth in the utterance of the preceding canzone, showing my condition under the figure of other things; because, to speak openly of the lady of whom I was enamored, no rhyme of any vulgar tongue was worthy,[2] nor were the hearers so

[1] That is, the object to which they were devoted.

[2] Verse in the vulgar tongue had been so appropriated to themes of love, that it was not worthy to discourse openly of higher matters. They must be concealed, as in an allegory, under the form of verses which seemed literally to treat of matters of love.

well disposed that they would have so easily apprehended words not fictitious,[1] nor would they have given credence to the true meaning as to the fictitious; because in truth it was the common belief that I was devoted to the former love, and there was no such belief in regard to the latter. I began, therefore, with saying, —

Ye who, intelligent, move the third heaven.

And because, as has been said, this lady was the daughter of God, queen of all things, the most noble and most beautiful Philosophy, it is now for us to see who these movers were, and what was this third heaven." (ii. 13.)

In the next chapter Dante says that by "Heaven" he means knowledge, and by "the Heavens" the various sciences, or branches of knowledge. "To the seven first heavens (those of the planets) correspond the seven sciences of the Trivium and of the Quadrivium, namely, Grammar, Dialectics, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology. To the eighth sphere, that is, to the sphere of the fixed stars, corresponds the science of Nature, which is called Physics, and the first science,[2] which is called Metaphysics, and to the ninth sphere [the crystalline] corresponds Moral science, and to the

[1] That is, they would not so readily have taken to and understood a poem openly about Philosophy, as they would one in which the true philosophic sense was concealed under an allegory of love.

[2] The "first science," as dealing with the primal substances or existences, which, immaterial, incorruptible, and not objects of sense, are to be known only through their effects.

quiet heaven [the Empyrean] corresponds Divine science, which is called Theology."

Dante goes on to set forth this correspondence by fanciful analogies. There is much in his treatment of the subject which is of interest as showing his conception of the order and progress of knowledge leading up to moral philosophy, "which disposes us for the other branches of knowledge," while last in the series, the source and the end of all, is "the Divine science, which is full of all peace, and will not endure any strife of opinions or of sophistical arguments, because of the most excellent certitude of its subject, which is God." This alone is perfect knowledge, "because it makes us see perfectly the Truth in which our souls repose." (ii. 15.)

Now the canzone on which Dante is commenting is addressed to the Intelligences who move the third heaven, the heaven of Venus, the heaven to which Rhetoric corresponds, because Rhetoric is the sweetest of all sciences, its object being to delight and to persuade. And according to the allegory, the movers of this heaven are the masters of Rhetoric, such as Boethius and Tully, "who by the sweetness of their speech directed me along the way, as has already been told, into the love, that is, into the study of this most gentle Lady Philosophy, with the radiance of their star, which is what is written of her. For in every science the writing is a star, full of light, which demonstrates that science. And now, this being made clear, the true meaning of the first stanza of the above canzone can be seen by means of the fictitious and literal interpretation. The

second stanza is sufficiently intelligible to where it says, *He maketh me upon a lady look;* where it is to be known that this lady is Philosophy, which truly is a lady full of sweetness, adorned with dignity, marvellous in knowledge, glorious in liberty, as will be shown in the third Treatise, in which her nobility is to be treated of. And where it says: *Let him who wisheth health to see, Take care upon this lady's eyes to look,* the eyes of this lady are her demonstrations, which, directed upon the eyes of the understanding, enamor the soul, made free in its conditions. Oh, ye sweetest and ineffable looks, sudden ravishers of the human mind, which appear in the eyes of Philosophy when she discourses with her lovers! truly in you is the salvation by which he who looks on you is made blessed, and safe from the death of ignorance and of vice. Where it is said: *Unless he fear the agony of sighs,* the meaning is, unless he fear the labor of study and the strife of doubts, which, at the beginning of the looks of this lady, rise multiplied, and then, her light continuing, fall, even as the little morning clouds before the face of the sun; so that the understanding, become her familiar, remains free and full of certainty, purged and luminous as the air by the noonday rays.

"The third stanza also is intelligible through the literal exposition to where it says: *Then weeps the soul.* Here there is need to attend carefully to a moral truth which may be noted in these words: that a man ought not, because of a greater friend, to forget the services he has received from a lesser; but if it be needful for him to

follow the one and to leave the other, he must follow the best, abandoning the other with some honest lamentation, by which he gives occasion to the one whom he follows, for more love.

"Afterward, where it says: *Then of my eyes*, it means nothing else, save that the hour was hard when the first demonstration of this lady entered into the eyes of my understanding, which was the immediate cause of this enamoring. And where it says: *My peers*, it means, the souls free from wretched and mean delights and from vulgar customs, and endowed with intelligence and memory. And then it says: *It slays*, and then: *I am slain*, which seems contrary to what is said before of the salvation proceeding from this lady. And therefore it is to be known that here one of the parties is speaking, and there the other is speaking, which were striving against each other, as has been made clear in what precedes. Wherefore it is no wonder if there it says 'yes,' and here it says 'no,' if good regard be paid to who descends, and who mounts.[1]

"Afterward, in the fourth stanza, where it says: *a little sprite of Love*, by this is meant a thought which is born of my study; and it is to be known that by *Love* in this allegory is always meant that study, which is the application of the mind to the thing whereof it is enamored.

"Afterward when it says: *Thou shalt see adornment of such lofty miracles*, it declares that through

[1] That which mounts is the love of Philosophy; that which descends is the love of Beatrice.

her the adornments of miracles shall be seen; and it says truth, for by the adornments of marvels is meant the sight of the causes of those things which Philosophy demonstrates; as the Philosopher seems to hold at the beginning of his Metaphysics, saying that by the sight of these adornments men begin to become enamored of this lady. . . . And thus, in conclusion of this second treatise, I say and affirm that the lady of whom I was enamored, after my first love, was the most beautiful and worthy daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy. And here ends the second treatise which is offered as the first viand of the Banquet."

The canzone prefixed to the third treatise begins with the verse: —

"Love which discourseth with me in my mind,"

and is that which Casella chose when Dante wooed him to sing,

"Met in the milder shades of Purgatory."

That Dante himself held it in high esteem thus seems manifest, but in form it is hardly so fair as the preceding canzone, and in substance, as the praise of Philosophy under the garb of a lady, it requires a no less elaborate exposition for its true comprehension. To this exposition, first of the literal meaning, and then of the meaning concealed within the letter, the third treatise is devoted.

It begins, "As has been narrated in the preceding treatise, my second love took its beginning from the

compassionate looks of a lady, which Love, finding my life disposed to his ardor, kindled, like a fire, from a little to a great flame, so that not only when I waked, but when I slept, her light found its way within my head. And how great was the desire which Love gave me to see her can neither be told nor understood. And not only was I thus desirous of her, but also of all those persons who had any proximity to her, either through acquaintance, or through some kinship. Oh, how many were the nights, when the eyes of other persons were reposing closed in sleep, and mine were gazing fixedly upon the dwelling place of my love!" He goes on to say that as intense fire insists on breaking out, so he could not refrain from speaking of Love, in praise of her whom he loved. And to this, beside other motives, the thought moved him, that "I should perhaps be blamed for levity of mind by many, when they heard that I had changed from my first love. Wherefore to prevent this blame, there was no better argument than to tell who the lady was that had changed me; for her manifest excellence would lead to the consideration of her power; and, on understanding the greatness of her power, the thought might follow that the most stable mind was, under her influence, liable to change; and therefore I was not to be judged either light-minded or unstable. Wherefore I undertook to praise this lady; and if not as was befitting, at least to the degree that was within my power." (iii. 1.)

After a long exposition of the literal meaning of the canzone which he then wrote, Dante says, "Returning

now to the beginning, I say that this lady is that lady of the understanding which is called Philosophy." And Philosophy, as he afterwards explains, "is naught else than the love of wisdom or of knowledge," and "the end of Philosophy is that most excellent delight which suffers neither intermission nor defect, namely, the true felicity which is acquired through contemplation of the truth." And those branches "of knowledge on which Philosophy fixes her sight most fervently, that is to say, natural science, moral science, and metaphysics, are called by her noble name." (iii. 11.)

When then "I say: *Love, which within my mind discourseth with me*, I mean by Love the study which I applied in order to acquire the love of this Lady, . . . and this study shaped within my mind continual new and most lofty considerations of this Lady." And when in his canzone he says, that *the Sun which circles all the world sees not a thing so gentle as she*, he means by the Sun, God, and that He, who is the spiritual light of the world, sees no such gentle thing as when He sees this Philosophy, "which is the loving practice of wisdom, which has its source in God, because in Him is supreme wisdom, and supreme love, and supreme act, which cannot exist elsewhere save as they proceed from Him. The Divine Philosophy is, therefore, of the Divine essence, because in this nothing can be added to its own essence; and it is most noble, because the most noble essence is the Divine; and it is in It in a perfect and true mode, as by eternal marriage." (iii. 12.)

And hence, it follows, that "where the love of this

bride of God is resplendent, all other loves become dark, and, as it were, extinct; because its eternal object, bearing no proportion to other objects, conquers and overcomes them."

Thus Philosophy, which in its first beginnings in the mind deals with things mortal and of earth, brings her lover at last to things immortal and heavenly. "It is to be known that the beholding of this lady was so largely ordained to us, not only that we may see the face she shows to us, but that we may desire and attain to those things which she holds concealed. And as through her many of those things are seen by the reason, so through her we believe that every miracle may have its reason in a higher intellect, and consequently may be. Whence our good faith has its origin, and from faith comes the hope of the anticipated things which we desire, and from that is born the working of charity; by the which three virtues we rise to philosophize in that celestial Athens where the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Epicureans, through the art of eternal truth, concur accordantly in a single will." (iii. 14.)

It is through Philosophy alone that beatitude, the chief good of Paradise, is to be attained. This delight cannot be found in anything on earth, save in her eyes and her smile, for "her eyes are the demonstrations of wisdom by which the truth is seen with full assurance, and her smiles are its persuasions, in which the inner light of wisdom is shown without a veil." "And only in beholding her is human perfection acquired, that is, the perfection of the reason, on which, as on its prin-

cipal part, all our being depends." Moreover another delight of Paradise, a secondary felicity, proceeds from her beauty, for morality is her beauty, and to live according to virtue is felicity. And finally, in highest praise of that Wisdom which is, as it were, the body of Philosophy, it was with her that God began the world, so that, speaking through Solomon, she says, "When God prepared the heavens I was there."

"Oh, worse than dead ye who fly from her friendship! Open your eyes and behold, that before ye were she loved you, and after ye were created, in order to set you right, she came in your own likeness to you! And if ye all cannot come unto the sight of her, honor her in her friends, and obey their commands, as those who announce to you the will of this eternal Empress. . . . And here may end the exposition of the true meaning of this Canzone." (iii. 15.)

Thus with the exaltation of Philosophy, till from the order of human knowledge she rises to be the Wisdom of God, finally incarnate in the Son of God himself, Dante completes the praise of her who, by the sweetness of her compassionating countenance, had drawn his eyes, and, following them, his heart, from his first love. Here, then, the relation of the *Banquet* to the *New Life* ends. Let us briefly review it.

The first part of the exposition, in the *Banquet*, of the experience which Dante underwent some time after the death of Beatrice, corresponds nearly enough with that portion of the narrative in the *New Life* which tells of the gentle lady whom he saw looking upon him from a

window with compassionate gaze, provided that this latter narrative be interpreted according to the allegoric signification which he teaches us in the *Banquet* to find in it. Mr. Lowell, in his essay on Dante, has pointed out that by putting the gentle lady at a window, which is a place to look out, he intended to imply that she personified Speculation, or the turning of the eyes of the mind to the contemplation of those things of which the study might distract the mind from sorrow. The conflict between the new thoughts which sought to take possession of Dante's soul and the old which held it in affliction for the loss of Beatrice is depicted in the sonnets of the *New Life* much as it is exhibited in the canzone of the *Banquet*. There is no difficulty in reconciling one account with the other, till we come in the *New Life* to the chapter (c. xl.) in which Dante tells of the vision of Beatrice, as she had first appeared to his eyes, which recalled him wholly to his allegiance to her, and made him "repent of the desire by which his heart had allowed itself to be possessed so vilely for some days, contrary to the constancy of the reason, so that this evil desire being driven out, all his thoughts returned to their most gentle Beatrice." Here the contradiction between the one narrative and the other appears complete, and at first sight irreconcilable, whether interpreted literally or allegorically. I believe that as they stand they are irreconcilable. But it seems to me that what may be called a moral reconciliation of them is possible, nay, must be possible, if we accept Dante's own assertion that the *Banquet* was intended to confirm and not in any respect to detract from the *New Life*.

The difference in the character of the two books needs first to be considered. The *New Life* is a book of poetry, a composition of art, a work largely shaped by the pure imagination, while the *Banquet* is essentially a work of moral philosophy, of unusual form, indeed, but of a form which does not interfere with the directness of its ethical teaching. The main doctrine of the portions of the *Banquet* which have immediate relation to the *New Life* is the mounting of the soul of man, by its inborn love of truth, through the study of the things of the visible world to the contemplation and study of the things of the invisible world, until the soul finds the beatitude which it seeks in union with God, who is the proper object of its love and in whom is Truth itself.

Now in the *New Life* this same doctrine lies concealed under a poetic garb. Beatrice on earth had been in her loveliness the type to her lover of the beauty of eternal things; she had lifted his heart from sensual to spiritual love; she had revealed to him the Creator in his creature. But her death had plunged him in a grief which derived no consolation from spiritual comforts. In his sorrow he at length turned himself to such sources of comfort as he could find in study, and, seeking silver, he found gold. For the acquisition of knowledge gradually opened to him the way to wisdom. Philosophy, which first showed herself to him as the mistress of human science, so long as she was only this, was merely the means of distracting his thoughts. And in this aspect she became hateful to him. Then Beatrice revealed

herself in vision to him no longer merely as a type of heavenly things, but as herself the guide to the knowledge of them, herself the revealer of the Divine truth. She, looking upon the face of God, reflected its light upon her lover. She became the image of Divine Philosophy.

This seems to me no forced interpretation of the close of the *New Life*. Save in the introduction of Beatrice as the image of the Philosophy through the love of which the higher truths of the spiritual life are attained, the substance is essentially the same with that of the *Banquet*. The *New Life* presents poetically what the *Banquet* presents without the coloring of poetry.

In the latter Dante omits all mention of the failure of the Philosophy applied to the lower ranges of thought to satisfy his cravings for the truth in which the soul finds its rest, as the wild beast in his lair, but narrates the unbroken progress from that Philosophy which deals with knowledge to that which is Wisdom itself, through which the vision of divine and eternal things is opened to the soul. Why he did not bring the narratives in his two books into complete external harmony is perhaps to be accounted for by the fact that the canzoni, to the exposition of which, as the praises of Philosophy under the form of a gentle lady, the second and third treatises of the *Banquet* are devoted, contain nothing which might give him direct occasion to recur to the figurative significance of Beatrice in her final aspect in the *New Life*.

It was his aim to show that his apparent faithlessness to her memory had not been such in reality; to no other

earthly love had he turned, but he had given himself to the love of that wisdom "which whoso findeth, findeth life," and having shown this, he desisted from setting forth the fact that the earthly Beatrice had become transfigured in his soul to the living image of Her "who maketh happy him who retaineth her."

With such an understanding as this of the relation between the *New Life* and the *Banquet*, they serve fitly as the joint introduction to the *Divine Comedy*, in which the genius of Dante at length found its full expression, and he accomplished his hope of "saying of Beatrice what was never said of any woman."

III.

ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE *VITA NUOVA*.

It is to be observed upon close examination, that the poems of the *Vita Nuova* are arranged in such order as to suggest an intention on the part of Dante to give his work a symmetrical structure. If the arrangement be accidental, or governed simply by the relation of the poems to the sequence of the events described in the narrative which connects them, it is certainly curious that they happened to fall into such order as to give to the little book a surprising regularity of construction.

The succession of the thirty-one poems of the *New Life* is as follows: —

5 sonnets,
1 ballad,

4 sonnets,
1 canzone,
4 sonnets,
1 canzone,
3 sonnets,
1 imperfect canzone,
1 canzone,
1 sonnet,
1 imperfect canzone,
8 sonnets.

At first sight no regularity appears in their order, but a little analysis reveals it. The most important poems, not only from their form and length, but also from their substance, are the three canzoni. Now it will be observed that the first canzone is preceded by ten and followed by four minor poems. The second canzone, which is by far the most elaborate poem of the whole, stands alone, holding the central place in the volume. The third canzone is preceded by four and followed by ten minor poems, like the first in inverse order. Thus the arrangement appears as follows:

10 minor poems,
1 canzone,
4 minor poems,
1 canzone,
4 minor poems,
1 canzone,
10 minor poems.

Here, leaving the central canzone to stand by itself, we have three series of ten poems each. It will be ob-

served further, that the first and the third canzone stand at the same distance from the central poem, and that ten minor poems separate the one from the beginning, the other from the end of the book, and in each instance nine of these poems are sonnets. It is also worth remark, that while the first canzone is followed by four sonnets, and the third is preceded by three sonnets and an imperfect canzone, this imperfect canzone is a single stanza, which has the same number of lines, and the same arrangement of its lines in respect to rhyme, as a sonnet, differing in this respect from the other canzoni. It may be fairly classed as a sonnet, its only difference from one being in the name that Dante has given to it.

The symmetrical construction now appears still more clearly: —

10 minor poems, all but one of them sonnets,
1 canzone,
4 sonnets,
1 canzone,
4 sonnets,
1 canzone,
10 minor poems, all but one of them sonnets.

It may be taken as evidence that this regularity of arrangement was intentional, that a comparison of the first with the third canzone shows them to be mutually related, one being the balance of the other. The first begins: —

"Donne ch' avete intelletto d' amore
Io vo' con voi della mia donna dire;"

and the last line of its first stanza is, —

"Chè non è cosa da parlarne altrui."

In the first stanza of the third there is a distinct reference to these words: —

"E perchè mi ricorda ch' io parlai
Della mia donna, mentre che vivia,
Donne gentili, volentier con vui,
Non vo' parlarne altrui
Se non a cor gentil che 'n donna sia."

The second stanza of the first canzone relates to the desire which is felt in Heaven for Beatrice. The corresponding stanza of the third declares that it was this desire for her which led to her being taken from the world. The third stanza of the one relates to the operation of her virtues and beauties upon earth; of the other, to the remembrance of them. There is a similarity of expression to be traced throughout.

In the last stanza, technically called the *commiato*, or dismissal, in which the poem is personified and sent on its way, in the first canzone it is called *figliuola d' amor*, in the third, *figliuola di tristizia*. One was the daughter of love, the other of sorrow; one was the poem recording Beatrice's life, the other her death. It is thus that one is made to serve as the complement and balance of the other in the structure of the *New Life*.

It may be possible to trace a similar relation between some of the minor poems of the beginning and the end of the volume; but I have not observed it, if it exists.

The second canzone is, as I have said, the most im-

portant poem in the volume, from the force of imagination displayed in it, as well as from its serving to connect the life of Beatrice with her death; and thus it holds, as of right, its central position in relation to the poems which precede and follow it.

But another, not less numerically symmetrical, division of these poems, no longer according to their form, but according to their subject, may be observed by the careful reader. The first ten of them relate to the beginning of Dante's love, and to his own early experiences as a lover. At their close he says that it seemed to him he had said enough of his own state, and that it behoved him to take up *a new theme*, and that he thereupon resolved thenceforth to make the praise of his lady his sole theme (cc. xvii., xviii). This theme is the ruling motive of the next ten poems. The last of them is interrupted by the death of Beatrice, and thereafter he takes up, as he again says, *a new theme*, and the next ten poems are devoted to his affliction, to the episode of the gentle lady, and to his return to his faithful love of Beatrice. One poem, the last, remains. It differs from all the rest; he calls it *a new thing*. It is the consummation of his experience of love in the vision of his Lady in glory.

It is to be noted as a peculiarity of this final poem, and an indication of its composition at a later period than those which precede it, that whereas the visions which they report have reference, without exception, to things which the poet had experienced, or seen, or fan-

cied, when awake, thus appearing to be dependent on previous waking excitements, the vision related in this sonnet seems, on the contrary, to have had its origin in no external circumstance, but to be the result of a purely internal condition of feeling. It was a *new* Intelligence that led his sigh upwards, — a new Intelligence which prepared him for his vision at Easter in 1300.

If a reason be inquired for that might lead Dante thus symmetrically to arrange the poems of this little book in a triple series of ten around a central unit, or in a triple series of ten, followed by a single poem in which he is guided to Heaven by a new Intelligence, it may perhaps be found in the value which he set upon ten as the perfect number; while in the three times repeated series, culminating in a single central or final poem, he may have pleased himself with some fanciful analogy to that three and one on which he dwells in the passage in which he treats of the friendliness of the number nine to Beatrice. At any rate, as he there says, "this is the reason which I see for it, and which best pleases me; though perchance a more subtile reason might be seen therein by a more subtile person."

NOTES.

NOTES.

I.

The book of my memory. So in the *Paradiso*, xxiii. 54, Dante calls the memory, "Il libro che 'l preterito rassegna," — "The book that records the past." In the *Inferno*, ii. 8, he says, "O mente! che scrivesti ciò ch' io vidi," — "O mind! that didst write down that which I saw." And again in the canzone beginning, "E' m' incresce di me sì malamente," he uses the same expression: —

> "Secondo che si trova
> Nel libro della mente," —

"According as is found in the book of memory." Chaucer and Shakespeare both use the same metaphor; it is indeed such a common one with the poets that its use by Dante is worth noting only because of its peculiar appropriateness to his own memory, the distinctness and strength of which were such as if its recollections were registered where every day he turned the leaf to read them.

II.

Nine times now, since my birth. The number *nine* plays a great part in this little book. According to the so-called Ptolemaic system of astronomy, which Dante adopted, there were nine revolving concentric heavens or spheres, in the centre of which the earth rested immovable, while outside

all was the tenth, — the Empyrean, — immovable and most divine, the seat of God, and the Paradise of Blessed Spirits. The Empyrean was the cause of the motion of the crystalline or first moving Heaven, "all the parts of which so long to be united with those of that most divine quiet Heaven, that it revolves within it with such desire that its velocity is almost inconceivable." (*Convito*, ii. 4.) The revolution of the invisible crystalline sphere was accomplished in very nearly twenty-four hours, and regulated the daily revolution of all the other spheres comprised within it. (*Convito*, ii. 3, 15.)

By *the heaven of light* Dante means the sphere of the Sun, the fourth in order above the earth, which, as he tells us, "moves, following the movement of the starry sphere, from west to east one degree in a hundred years." The apparent movement of the Heaven of the Fixed Stars from west to east, to which Dante here refers, is due to what in modern times has been called the precession of the equinoxes. "The term denotes a small annual variation in the position of the line in which the planes of the ecliptic and equator intersect each other, in consequence of which the sun returns to the same equinoctial point before completing his apparent revolution with respect to the fixed stars." The precessional motion of the equinoctial points was known at an early period, but its precise rate has only been recently determined. The retrogradation is now estimated at one degree in seventy-one and six tenths years, but in Dante's time the rate at which the equinoctial points retrograded on the ecliptic was supposed to be about one degree in a hundred years. (*Convito*, ii. 6.) *One of the twelve parts of a degree* would consequently be passed through in eight and a half years. As Dante was born in 1265, it follows that his first meeting with Beatrice was in 1274.

The glorious Lady of my mind: the epithet *gloriosa* is here used to indicate that the Lady was no longer living, and the meaning of these words is, "the Lady of my memory now in glory." See chapter xxix.

Who was called Beatrice by many who knew not what to call her: that is, who knowing not her proper name called her Beatrice, *she who blesses*, as the name belonging to her by right of nature. Compare the sonnet in chapter xxiv. in which Love says of Beatrice —

"and she, because
She so resembleth me, is named Love."

The spirit of life . . . . began to tremble. Compare with this passage the canzone beginning, "E' m' incresce di me sì malamente," especially that portion of it in which Dante speaks of the effect of the first sight of his lady upon him: —

"E, se 'l libro non erra,
Lo spirito maggior tremò sì forte,
Che parve ben, che morte
Per lui in questo mondo giunta fosse."

"And if the book errs not,
The greater spirit trembled so amain,
That it appeared full plain
That death for it had in this world arrived."

"*She seems not the daughter of mortal man, but of God.*"

Οὐδὲ ἐώϰει
Ἀνδρός γε θνητοῦ παῖς ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖο.
Iliad, xxiv. 258.

Dante's acquaintance with this saying of Homer's concern-

ing Hector came through Aristotle, who cites it in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (vii. 1). The *Iliad* was not accessible to readers in Dante's time.

Boccaccio has closely imitated this section of the *Vita Nuova* in the beginning of his *Filocopo*, introducing even the same citation from Homer.

III.

This most gentle lady. The usual epithet which Dante in the *New Life* applies to Beatrice is *gentilissima*, "most gentle," while other ladies to whom he refers are called simply *gentile*, "gentle." The term is used with a signification similar to that which it has in our own early literature, and of fuller meaning than it now retains. It refers both to race, as in the phrase "of gentle birth," and to qualities of nature and character.

The canzone to the illustration of which the fourth Treatise of the *Convito* is devoted, is on *gentilezza*, and the poet tells us that gentilesse is a grace of God, the companion of virtue, and bestowed on that soul which God sees to possess an outward form adapted and disposed to receive this divine infusion. And in the comment he says (c. 14) that gentleness and nobleness are the same, and (c. 16) that "by nobleness is meant the perfection of its own nature in anything." *Gentilissima*, therefore, as Dante uses it, implies all that is loveliest in person and character.

In the *New Life*, especially after Beatrice's death, the term *gloriosa* is occasionally substituted for *gentilissima ;* and the latter epithet is never applied to her in the *Divine Comedy*. Its appropriateness had ceased, for there was "another glory of the celestial body."

Her ineffable courtesy. "Courtesy" also fails to render the full significance of *cortesia*. In the *Convito* (ii. 11) Dante says: "Nothing is more becoming to a lady than courtesy. And let not the wretched herd be deceived, supposing courtesy to be naught else than liberality; for liberality is a special act of courtesy, not courtesy in general. Courtesy and integrity are all one; and because in courts of old the virtues and fair manners were customary (as to-day the opposite is the case), this word was derived from the courts; and to say courtesy was the same as to say the usage of the court; but, if to-day this word were to be derived from courts, especially from those of Italy, it would mean naught else than depravity."

Famous poets at that time. The infancy of Italian poetry at this period is indicated by the use here of the word *trovatore*, "troubadour," which I have translated by "poet."

To every captive soul and gentle heart. This dark sonnet is of interest as being the earliest known poetic composition by Dante, and also as describing a vision. I have already referred to the fact, that this book is in great part composed of the account of a series of visions, and is thus connected in the form of its imaginations with the great work of Dante's later years. As a description of things seen by the spiritual eye, this sonnet is united in poetic relationship to the nobler visions of the *Divine Comedy;* but it has the defects of a juvenile composition, and alike in form and in conception resembles the work of Dante's poetic predecessors, from whose archaic limitations his genius was soon to free itself.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. The interruption of

the narrative here, and after or before all the following poetic compositions in the *New Life*, by a formal division and analysis of the structure of each poem, interferes with the continuity of the story, and may sometimes jar on the feelings of the modern reader by seeming to connect an element of artificiality with the expression of feeling the depth and simplicity of which it is impossible to doubt. But the literary taste and training of Dante's day were so different from ours, that it is wrong to apply our modern standard to his work. In compiling and publishing the *New Life* he was making a great innovation. He was claiming a position of dignity for his work which had hitherto been refused to all compositions in the vulgar tongue. It was an assault on the literary supremacy, still superstitiously maintained, of the Latin language. He had to prove his right, not only as poet, but also as scholar ; to show that his verses were productions deserving of as much consideration as if composed in a dead language, and that a comment upon them was as much in place as upon the verses of a classic author.

There is no essential incongruity between these divisions and the remainder of the *New Life*. They are simply indications of an early stage of literary culture, and their *naïveté* often adds a fresh charm of simplicity to the little book.

He whom I call first of my friends. This was Guido Cavalcanti. Their friendship was of long duration, beginning thus in Dante's nineteenth year, and ending only with Guido's death in 1300. It may be taken as a proof of its intimacy, as well as of Dante's high estimate of the genius of his friend, that, when in his course through Hell he is recognized by the father of Guido, the first words of the old man to him are : —

"If through this blind
Prison thou goest by loftiness of genius,
Where is my son? and why is he not with thee?"
Inferno, x. 58–60.

Benvenuto da Imola in his comment on this canto calls Guido "alter oculus Florentiæ tempore Dantis."

The sonnet of Guido in reply to that sent him by Dante has been preserved, and may be thus translated: —

"All worth, in my opinion, thou hast seen,
All joy, and good as much as man may know,
If thou in power of that strong lord hast been,
Who rules the world of honor here below.
For there he hath his life where trouble dies,
And holds discourse within the tender soul;
And unto folk in dreams so sweet he hies,
He bears away their hearts withouten dole.
Your heart he bore away, for in his sight
Death its demand was making for your dame,
Fearful of which he fed her with that heart.
But when he seemed in sorrow to depart,
Sweet was the dream that to its end thus came,
For death was conquered by its opposite."

See the excellent edition of *Le Rime di Guido Cavalcanti*, by Professor Nicola Arnone, Florence, 1881.

Two other answers to Dante's sonnet have also come down to us, one by the famous poet Cino da Pistoja, to whom a letter ascribed to Dante is addressed, in which the writer calls him *frater carissime*. Dante in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquio* praises Cino's poems, beside always citing his own poems as by "the friend of Cino." The other answer is by Dante de Majano, one of the minor poets of the day. Neither of them is worth translating.

The true meaning of this dream was not then seen by any one. The possession of Dante's heart by the lady in the arms of Love was clearly evident, but it was not seen that the departure of Love in tears to Heaven was the premonition of the death of Beatrice.

VI.

I composed an epistle in the form of a serventese. The *sirvente* or *serventese* was a form of poetic composition derived by the Italians from the Provençal poets. The *sirvente* of the Provençals seems to have been originally, as its name indicates, a poem of service or honor, but it soon acquired the character of a poem of praise or satire, seldom treating of matters of love. It was written sometimes in stanzas of eight lines, sometimes in quatrains, but more commonly in triplets, interwoven by the rhyme. But, according to Crescimbeni (*Della Poesia Italiana*, ii. 13), its construction seems not to have been determined by any fixed rules.

Among Dante's miscellaneous poems there is a sonnet in which there seems to be a reference to the list of the sixty fair women, on which the name of his lady stood as the ninth. It is addressed to Guido Cavalcanti, and the friend referred to in it under the name of Lapo is supposed to have been one Lapo Gianni, — like his friends, a writer of verses in those poetic days. The name of Guido's mistress was Giovanna, and that of Lapo's love was Lagia, as we learn from one of his poems. It is she who is referred to in the sonnet as having stood thirtieth on the roll of fair ladies. The sonnet has a modern tone of fancy and feeling, and is known to English readers by a translation of it made by Shelley. The following is a more literal version : —

"Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I
Might by enchantment's magic spell be ta'en
And set aboard a bark, across the main,
With every wind, as we might choose, to hie:
So no mischance, nor any evil weather
Might aught of hinderance ever be to us,
But living always in one liking thus,
Our will should aye increase to stay together.
And Lady Joan and Lady Beatris,
With her the thirtieth upon my roll,
Might the good wizard bring with us to stay;
Then there would we discourse of love alway,
And each of them should be content in soul,
As all of us would surely be, I wis."

VII.

And then I devised this sonnet. This poem belongs to the class of what are called *sonnetti doppi* — doubled sonnets. A sonnet of this kind is composed of two sextets followed by two quatrains, instead of being formed as a regular sonnet of two quatrains followed by two triplets. The lines of the regular sonnet are all of five accented feet, while in this form of sonnet, as used by Dante and other writers, the second and fifth lines of each sextet, and the third of each quartet, are of but three feet. As in the regular sonnet, there are but four pairs of rhymes, two in the sextets and two in the quatrains.

The next poem but one is a sonnet of the same sort, and is the only other instance of the use of this form by Dante.

O vos omnes, etc. These words are from *Lamentations*, i. 12.

VIII.

Hear ye what honor Love to her did pay,
For him in real form I saw lament
Above the lovely image of the dead;
And oft toward the heaven he raised his head.

To read these lines aright we must understand that by *Love in real form* Dante intends to signify Beatrice herself, whom he had beheld lamenting over the lovely damsel dead. In the sonnet in chapter xxiv. he says that Love said to him that this lady, —

"because
She so resembleth me, hath Love for name."

Who merits heaven, alone
May have the hope her company to share.

Possibly these are the words to which Dante refers when he says that in the last part of the words which he said of the dead damsel he touched somewhat on the fact that he had seen her sometimes with his lady.

Among Dante's minor poems is the following sonnet, the closing phrase of which resembles these lines : —

"Of ladies I beheld a gentle band,
This All Saints Day that is but just now gone,
And one of them, as if the chief, came on,
Leading Love with her upon her right hand.
From out her eyes there darted forth a light,
Which seemed to be a spirit all on fire;
And me to look such boldness did inspire,
I saw upon her face an angel bright.
To whoso worthy was, gave salutation
That lowly and benign one with her eyes,
Filling each heart with noble emulation.

This sovereign one, I think, from heaven did rise,
And came unto the earth for our salvation,
For who is near her hath of bliss the prize."

In this sonnet there is a play upon the word *salute*, with its triple meaning of "health," "salutation" and "salvation." A similar use of the word is often to be noticed in the *New Life;* and thus in the *De Monarchia*, "Pax vobis, Salus hominum salutabat."

XII.

Ego tanquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentiæ partes; tu autem non sic [I am as the centre of a circle, to which the parts of the circumference bear an equal relation; but thou art not so].

The meaning of this dark saying may be: "I am the centre of a circle of which all lovers form the circumference, all equally dependent on and trusting in me; but thou, my son, though a faithful lover, art not so trusted by thy love." Love, therefore, weeps for his vassal, whose fidelity he knows, and bids his liegeman call upon him to give evidence of his constancy.

Take care to adorn them with sweet harmony. Whether this direction refers simply to the structure of the verse, or to the musical notes to which the ballad was to be sung, is not clear. It is certain that these poetic compositions — canzoni, sonnets, and ballads — were, as their names imply, often, perhaps commonly, intended to be sung.

In the *De Vulgari Eloquio* (ii. 3), Dante, speaking of the superior excellence of the canzone over all other forms of poetry in the vulgar tongue, says, in words not altogether plain, "Sed cantiones per se totum quod debent, efficiunt,

quod ballatæ non faciunt (indigent enim plausoribus ad quos editæ sunt);" which Trissino translates as follows: "Ma le canzoni fanno per se stesse tutto quello che denno; il che le ballate non fanno, perciò che hanno bisogno di sonatori, ai quali sono fatte;" and this translation may in turn be rendered as follows: "But canzoni are complete in themselves; which ballads are not, for they require musicians for whom they are composed." But this translation gives to the word *plausores* a very unusual, if not an unexampled meaning; and if it be accepted as correct, the statement seems to exclude canzoni from the list of poems to be sung, which we know is incorrect. As ballads were written to be sung by dancers, perhaps the sense of the words is as follows: "Canzoni are complete in themselves; which ballads are not, for they require the dancers for whom they are composed." If this be the right interpretation, Dante may have been led into using *plausor* in this equally unexampled sense, from recalling the line (*Æneid*, vi. 644): —

"Pars pedibus *plaudunt* choreas, et carmina dicunt;"

thus translated by Mr. Conington: —

"Some ply the dance with eager feet,
And chant responsive to its beat."

Virgil's line is a translation from the *Odyssey*, viii. 264: —

πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσίν.

Through favor unto my sweet melody.

This and the four following verses are supposed to be addressed to Love by the ballad.

I intend to solve . . . this doubt . . . in a more difficult passage, — namely, in chapter xxv.

XIV.

They were met together here to attend a gentle lady who was married that day. It has been supposed by some commentators on this passage that the marriage thus referred to was that of Beatrice herself; but this seems hardly probable. If the beloved of Dante was — as has been generally supposed, on the untrustworthy authority of Boccaccio — the daughter of Folco Portinari, she was married some time before January, 1287, for the will of her father, which is dated on the 15th of that month, contains the following clause: *Item: Dominæ Bici filiæ suæ et uxori Domini Simonis de Bardis reliquit libr.* 50 *ad floren*, — "Item: To Mistress Bice his daughter, wife of Master Simon de' Bardi, he bequeaths fifty florins." In the spring of 1290, Beatrice died. In 1291 Dante himself was married to Gemma dei Donati.

I am, on many grounds, disposed to reject Boccaccio's statement in regard to Beatrice, and, consequently, to believe that nothing is known of her but what Dante tells.

It shows how completely Dante's inner life was that of the imagination, that there is no reference in any of his works to the marriage of Beatrice, or to his own, — and no mention of his wife, or of his children.

There are stories that Dante was unhappy with his wife; but they start with Boccaccio, who was a story-telling gossip. He insinuates more than he asserts concerning Dante's domestic infelicity, and concludes a vague declamation about the miseries of married life with the words, "Truly, I do not affirm that these things happened to Dante, for *I do not know*." One thing is known, however, which deserves remembrance, — that when, after some years, a daughter was born to Dante, the name which she received was Beatrice.

The whole of this passage of the *New Life*, like many others, is full of the intense and exaggerated expressions of the passionate emotion of youth. As yet his sensibility overmasters the lover and poet, but discipline comes from defeat, and out of sorrow comes strength ; each new trial helping toward that complete self-possession which he finally attained, and which he displays in the *Divine Comedy*.

I leaned against a painting which ran around the wall of this house. Probably a pictured hanging or tapestry, which clothed the wall.

XVII.

Although ever afterwards I should abstain from addressing her. The preceding sonnet is the last of the poems addressed directly to Beatrice.

XIX.

Ladies that have intelligence of Love. This is one of the most beautiful minor poems of Dante, and would seem to have been justly prized by him ; for when he meets with Bonagiunta da Lucca, who had been a writer of verses of the old style, he represents himself as addressed by him : —

"But say, if I see him who drew forth the new rhymes, beginning, '*Ladies, that have intelligence of Love*'?" — *Purgatory*, xxiv. 48–61.

> *And who shall say in hell to the foredoomed,*
> *I have beheld the hope of those in bliss.*

The passage of which these lines are the close has sometimes been interpreted as containing a hint of the *Divine Comedy*. But it seems improbable that the conception of the great

poem was formed in Dante's mind at the time to which this canzone is assigned, and hardly less improbable that these lines were inserted in the canzone at a later date, when the project of the *Divine Comedy* was complete.

If Dante had not written the *Divine Comedy*, these words would awaken no suspicion of a double meaning, and the simple interpretation of which they are susceptible would then appear sufficient. They would be taken to mean that the youthful poet, in the exaltation of his passion and the exaggeration of his humility, feeling the infinite distance between the perfection of his beloved and his own sinfulness, and acknowledging the separation that such difference would create between himself and her in the eternal world, set her, where she belonged, in highest heaven, but doomed himself to hell, foreseeing that even there he should retain the joy of remembering that he had beheld the hope of those in bliss.

— for when she goes her way
Love casts a frost upon all caitiff hearts.

This passage of the canzone seems to have been suggested by the last verses of one of the sonnets of Guido Guinicelli, which begins

"I wish with truth to sing my lady's praise."

The first verses of the sonnet are commonplace, but the closing lines, which Dante has followed and improved, are simple and beautiful: —

"She goes her way so gentle and so fair,
That she by her salute abateth pride;
By her the faithless unto faith is brought;
Man who is vile cannot to her come near;
Still greater virtue doth with her abide,
That none w[illegible]e sees her can have ill thought."

XX.

Thinking that after such a treatise it were beautiful to treat somewhat of Love.

Dante calls his canzone a *trattato*, inasmuch as he had *treated* in it of his lady ; and after discourse of her, he turned naturally to discourse of love.

> *Love is but one thing with the gentle heart,*
> *As in the saying of the sage we find.*

The sage whose saying is thus referred to was doubtless Dante's poetic forerunner, Guido Guinicelli. It was not uncommon to give the title of sage to a poet.

> " Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,"

says Dante to Virgil in the first canto of the *Inferno* (v. 89) ; and so again in the seventh canto (v. 3) he says,

> " And that benignant Sage who all things knew."

Guido Guinicelli begins one of his canzoni thus : —

> " Unto the gentle heart Love aye repairs
> As doth a bird unto the greenwood's shade ;
> Love was not, truly, ere the gentle heart,
> Nor gentle heart ere love, by nature made."

The question what is Love — *quid sit Amor* — was one which much occupied the Florentine poets of the thirteenth century. Guido Cavalcanti wrote a famous and obscure canzone on the theme, and all the host of lesser rhymesters employed their ingenuity, rather than their imagination, in trying to define the subtile essence of that which is in its nature incapable of precise definition.

This reference to Guido Guinicelli in Dante's youthful sonnet is of the more interest from the fact that in his mature

years, when he meets Guido Guinicelli in Purgatory, he speaks of him as "father of me and of my betters, who ever used sweet and gracious rhymes of love." And when Guido says, "Tell me what is the cause why in speech and look thou showest that thou dost hold me dear?" he replies, "The sweet verses of yours, which, so long as the modern fashion shall endure, will still make dear their ink." (*Purgatory*, xxvi. 91–114.)

Guinicelli is said to have died in 1276, when Dante was eleven years old.

XXII.

He who had been the begetter of such a marvel as this most noble Beatrice was seen to be, departing from this life.

Folco Portinari, the father of that Beatrice who is generally assumed to have been the beloved of Dante, died on the 31st of December, 1289. He was a man of repute and wealth, and his name is still honored in Florence as that of the founder of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.

XXIII.

These angels sang gloriously, and the words of their song it seemed to me were these: "Osanna in excelsis!"

In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante frequently speaks of angels and of the spirits of the blessed singing Hosanna.

XXIV.

The lady of . . . my first friend. The name of the lady of Guido Cavalcanti was Giovanna, or Joan; but because of her beauty the name of *Primavera*, that is, "Spring," had been given to her; and as the freshness of spring precedes

the full glory of summer, so Joan was the forerunner of Beatrice, even as John had been the forerunner of the Light of the World.

Ego vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini. — *Matthew*, iii. 3.

XXV.

According to the philosopher. That is, Aristotle.

For to write in rhyme in the vulgar is, after a manner, the same thing as to write in verse in Latin, — so that the writers in rhyme no less deserve the name of poets.

In the tongue of the oco, *and in the tongue of the* sì. That is, in the languages of Provence, or Languedoc, and of Tuscany. In his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquio*, Dante, speaking of the varieties of language in Europe, says: "From one and the same idiom sprang divers vulgar tongues; for all that tract which extends from the mouth of the Danube, or Lake Mæotis, to the borders of the West which are defined by the boundaries of England, Italy, and France, and by the ocean, was occupied by one sole idiom, though afterwards it was diverted into different vulgar tongues by the Slavonians, Hungarians, Germans, Saxons, English, and other nations as many as there were; this alone remaining in almost all as a sign of common origin, that nearly all of them use *Jo* [Ya] in affirmation. Beginning from this idiom, namely, from the limits of the Hungarians on the East, another idiom occupied the whole of what is called Europe on that side, and even stretched beyond. But all that remains of Europe outside of these two was occupied by a third idiom, which yet may seem to be threefold. For some say in affirmation *Oc*,

others *Oil*, others *Sì*, namely, the Spaniards, the French, and the Italians. . . . Those that use *Oc* occupy the western part of Southern Europe, beginning from the confines of Genoa. Those that say *Sì* occupy the region east of these limits, namely, as far as that promontory of Italy from which the gulf of the Adriatic Sea begins, and Sicily. But those that use *Oil* are somewhat to the north of these, for on the east and north they have the Germans, on the west they are walled in by the English Sea, and bounded by the mountains of Aragon, and on the south also they are shut in by the Provençals and by the curve of the Apennines." (Lib. i. c. 8.)

In the thirty-third canto of the *Inferno* the poet defines Italy as

"That fair land wherein the *sì* doth sound."

Some illiterate persons acquired the fame of skill in writing verse, — that is, of being poets.

Æole, namque tibi, etc. — *Æneid*, i. 65.

Tuus, O regina, quid optes, etc. — *Id.*, 76.

Dardanidæ duri, etc. — *Id.*, iii. 94. This was the voice of an oracle.

Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis. — *Pharsalia*, i. 44.

Dic mihi, Musa, virum, etc. — *De Arte Poetica*, 141. This is Horace's translation of the opening lines of the *Odyssey*.

Bella mihi, video, bella parantur, ait. — *Remedium Amoris*, v. 2.

And my first friend and I are well acquainted with those who rhyme thus foolishly. The digression which thus concludes with a reference to Guido Cavalcanti that shows the sympathy existing between him and Dante, is an illustration of the infancy of the new literature and the poverty of intellectual culture at the time when the *Vita Nuova* was written. It shows how little familiarity those into whose hands the book was likely to fall were expected to possess with the common forms of poetry, and the methods of poetic expression. It indicates also something of the range of Dante's reading. Virgil was already his master and poet, and the four other poets to whom in this digression he refers reappear in company in the *Divine Comedy*: —

"In the mean time a voice was heard by me:
'All honor be to the pre-eminent poet,
His shade returns again that was departed.'
After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.
To say to me began my gracious Master:
'Him with that falchion in his hand behold,
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.
That one is Homer, poet sovereign;
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.'"

Hell, iv. 79–90.

The contrast between such powerfully imaginative poetry as the magnificent and living scene of which these verses form part, and a passage like this literal statement in the *Vita Nuova* concerning poetic usage and diction, affords a measure of the growth of Dante's knowledge and imagination from boyhood to manhood, as well as of the corresponding growth in the literary sense of the public of Italian

readers. The air of Florence was genial to art and to letters during this period, and they occupied a degree of attention and interest rarely anywhere accorded to them. Dante was himself in large measure the source of the pervading spirit to which he gave the fullest expression, and of which he felt the reflex influence acting to quicken and confirm his individual genius. He was not only poet, but, as this passage shows, critic also ; and, indeed, this passage is the first essay of modern criticism. In him the poetic and critical faculties were so balanced and proportioned, that each, as it developed, promoted the full and just play of the other.

The direct literary impulse which Dante gave was at once very great, and was soon to become unparalleled. But his commentators in the century after his death often seem to have caught the formal literalism of this youthful passage on poetic diction, and to have joined with it a fantastic pedantry, in their discourse upon the most poetic of poems. Even Boccaccio displays thus the literary juvenility of his time.

As this passage stands in the *New Life* it is in marked contrast with the pages which immediately follow, pages as tender, sweet, and simple as were ever written.

XXVI.

This portion of the *New Life* belongs to the year 1289, and the contrast between the tender sweetness and serenity of these poems, and the character of the events of the period at which they were written, is complete. It was in this year that Count Ugolino and his sons and grandsons were starved by the Pisans in their tower prison. A few months later in the same year, Francesca da Rimini was murdered by her husband. Between the dates of these two cruel deeds the Florentines had won the victory of Campaldino

over their Ghibelline enemies ; and thus, in this short space, the materials had been given to the poet for the two best known and most powerful narratives and for one of the most striking episodes of the *Divina Commedia.*

In the great and hard-fought battle of Campaldino, Dante himself took part. "I was at first greatly afraid," he says, in a letter of which a few sentences have been preserved in Lionardo Aretino's life of the poet, — "but at the end I felt the greatest joy, — according to the various chances of the battle." When the victorious army returned to Florence, a splendid procession, with the clergy at its head, with the arts of the city each under its banner, and with all manner of pomp, went out to meet it. There were long-continued feasts and rejoicings. The battle had been fought on the 11th of June, the day of St. Barnabas, and the Republic, though already engaged in magnificent works of church-building, decreed that a new church should be erected in honor of the Saint on whose day the victory had been won.

A little later in that summer, Dante was one of a troop of Florentines who joined the forces of Lucca in levying war upon the Pisan territory. The stronghold of Caprona was taken, and Dante was present at its capture ; for he says, "I saw the foot-soldiers, who, having made terms, came out from Caprona, afraid when they beheld themselves among so many enemies." (*Hell*, xxi. 94–96.)

Thus, during a great part of the summer of 1289, Dante was in active service as a soldier. He was no lovesick idler, but was already taking his part in the affairs of the state which he was afterwards to be called on for a time to assist in governing, and he was laying up those stores of experience which were to serve as the material out of which his vivifying imagination was to form the great national poem of Italy. But of this active life, of these personal engage-

ments, of these terrible events which took such strong possession of his soul, there is no word, no suggestion even, in the book of his new life. In it there is no echo, however faint, of those storms of public violence and private passion which broke dark over Italy. The story of the *New Life* is a narrative of absorbing personal emotions, told as if the world were the abode of tenderness and peace. Every man in some sort leads a double life, — one real and his own, the other seeming and the world's, but with few is the separation so entire as it was with Dante.

XXIX.

Quomodo sedet sola civitas, etc. — Lamentations, i. 1. With the same verse from *Lamentations* Dante began the letter which he addressed to the Italian Cardinals in 1314, on occasion of the election of a papal successor to Clement V., lamenting the desertion of Rome by the head of the Church, upbraiding the prelates by whom the interests of the fold of Christ were abandoned, and exhorting the Italian Cardinals to stand firm for the good of the Church and of Italy.

It is no part of the present design, if we consider the proem which precedes this little book. The words which it was his intention to copy into this little book were those only which related to his own new life.

In so doing, it would be needful for me to praise myself. What circumstance or action Dante may refer to in these words is wholly unknown.

The number nine. The importance which Dante attributes to the relation of the number nine to Beatrice is no indica-

tion of puerility of intelligence or poverty of feeling, but gives evidence of the sensitiveness of his imagination to the impressions of a popular superstition, which rested on a basis of natural but unexplained fact. The exalted explanations which his fancy invented to account for the friendliness of this celestial number to Beatrice, were the simple expression of a condition of impassioned sentiment in which the suggestions of fancy seem more true than the literal witness of fact.

The mysterious and mystical properties and relations of numbers were in Dante's time a subject of serious study, and held to mathematics proper something the same relation as alchemy held towards chemistry.

Cornelius Agrippa, in his book on Occult Philosophy, says on this subject: "Themistius truly, and Boethius, and Averroes the Arabian, together with Plato, so exalt numbers, that they deem no one able without them to philosophize rightly. They speak, indeed, of rational and formal number, not of the material, sensible, or spoken number used by traders. . . . But they direct their attention to the proportion resulting from the latter, which they call natural, formal, and rational number, and from which great mysteries (*sacramenta*) proceed, alike in natural and in divine and celestial affairs. . . . That great efficacy and power, for good and for bad, lies hid in numbers, not only the most illustrious philosophers unanimously teach, but also the Catholic Doctors." (*De Occulta Philosophia*, lib. ii. cc. 2, 3.)

Sir Thomas Browne's *Garden of Cyrus* is a good comparatively modern instance of the speculations of a fanciful and contemplative mind concerning the mysteries and secrets of number. The number five is the one whose properties he sets forth.

XXX.

According to the mode of reckoning in Arabia. Alfraganus who is twice cited in the *Convito*, says in his treatise which is known as *Elementa Astronomica* that the Arabians reckoned their day from sunset to sunset. We may infer then from Dante's phrase that Beatrice died in the evening of our eighth of June, and in order to show the friendliness of the number nine to her he counts the day, according to the Arabian reckoning, as the ninth. See letter of the Rev. Dr. Moore in *The Academy*, Dec. 1, 1894.

The perfect number. According to Pythagoras, ten was the perfect number. "Decas vero ultra omnes habenda, quae omnes numeros diversae virtutis ac perfectionis intra se habet." Martiani Capellae, lib. vii. § 742.

Since, according to Ptolemy and according to the Christian truth, there are nine heavens which move. By the Christian truth Dante means, not a dogma of religion, but an opinion or doctrine maintained by one or more of those teachers whom the Church generally regarded as authorities. Compare *Convito*, ii. 3.

Since three is the factor by itself of nine, and the Author of miracles by himself is three. In the Italian the same word, *fattore*, serves both for "factor" and "author." The play on the word is characteristic.

XXXII.

No quality of cold 't was took her there,
Nor yet of heat.

Disease and death were supposed to result from excess of the principle of cold or of heat in the system.

Nor is there wit so high of villain heart
That aught concerning her it can conceive;
Therefore to it comes not the wish to weep.

It is only the evil-disposed who do not weep for her, and they weep not, because they are powerless to conceive aught of her.

XXXIII.

There came to me one who . . . was my friend next in order after the first; and he was so near in blood to this lady in glory that there was none nearer. This friend of the poet would seem from these words to have been the brother of Beatrice.

Among the sonnets ascribed to Dante is one which, if it be his, must have been written about this time, and which, although not included in the *New Life*, is perhaps not unworthy to find a place here. Its imagery, at least, connects it with some of the sonnets in the earlier portion of the book.

"One day came Melancholy unto me,
And said, 'With thee I will awhile abide;'
And, as it seemed, attending at her side,
Anger and Grief did bear her company.
'Depart! Away!' I cried out eagerly.
Then like a Greek she unto me replied;
And while she stood discoursing in full tide,
I looked, and Love approaching us I see.
In cloth of black full strangely was he clad;
A little hood he wore upon his head,
And down his face tears flowing fast he had.
'Poor little wretch! what aileth thee?' I said.
And he replied, 'I woful am, and sad,
Sweet brother, for our lady who is dead.'"

XXXV.

I was drawing an angel upon certain tablets. This is an interesting illustration of the personal tastes of Dante, and of his pursuits. "Dante was an excellent draughtsman," says Lionardo Aretino. In 1291 Giotto, who as an artist deserves to rank side by side with Dante as a poet, was, if we may believe tradition, but fifteen years old. The friendship which existed between him and Dante had its beginning at a later period. At this time Cimabue still held the field. This great artist often painted angels around the figures of the Virgin and her Child; and in his most famous picture, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, there are certain angels of which Vasari says, with truth, that, though painted in the Greek manner, they show an approach toward the modern style of drawing. These angels may well have seemed beautiful to eyes accustomed to the hard unnaturalness of earlier works. The love of art pervaded Florence, and a nature so sensitive and so sympathetic as Dante's could not but partake of it in the fullest measure. Art was then no adjunct of sentimentalism, no encourager of idleness. It was connected with all that was most serious and delightful in life. It is difficult, indeed, to appreciate the earnestness with which painting, the latest of the arts to feel the breath of the revival, was followed, or to realize the delight which it gave, when it seemed, as by a miracle, to fling off the winding-sheet that had long wrapped its stiffened limbs, and to come forth with new and unexampled life.

This angel drawn by Dante brings to mind the sculptured Angel which the poet saw in Purgatory.

> "The Angel, who came down to earth with tidings
> Of peace, that had been wept for many a year,
> And opened H[illegible]en from its long interdict,

In front of us appeared so truthfully
There sculptured in a gracious attitude,
He did not seem an image that is silent."
Purgatory, x. 34–39.

To that calm heaven where Mary hath her home.

The original is,

Nel ciel dell' umiltate ov' è Maria.

The words *umiltà*, *umile*, *umiliare*, seem to be sometimes used by Dante in a sense which implies mildness, peace, tranquillity. In the *Convito* (iii. 15) he interprets the verse *Quest' è colei ch' umilia ogni perverso*, "This is she who makes every perverse one humble," by the words, *volge dolcemente chi fuori del debito ordine è piegato*, "mildly turns whoso has taken a wrong course."

The words *umile*, *umiltà*, frequently recur in the *New Life*, and with other similar words, such as *gentile*, *pace*, *amore*, *morte*, serve as the key note of its harmony.

That tranquil heaven where Mary dwells is the Empyrean, quieted by fulness of Love. Dante (*Convito*, ii. 15) says: "The Empyrean Heaven by its peace resembles the Divine Science, which is full of all peace; and which suffers no strife of opinions or sophistical arguments, because of the exceeding certitude of its subject, which is God."

XXXIX.

And that it is fitting to call the appetite the heart, and the reason the soul, is sufficiently plain to those to whom it pleases me that this should be disclosed. In the *Convito* (iv. 22) Dante says: "No one should say that every appetite is of the soul, for here by the soul is meant only that which belongs to the rational part, namely, the will and the intellect;

so that, if one should choose to call the appetite of the senses the soul, he can have here no place nor room ; for let no one doubt that the rational appetite is more noble than the sensual, and therefore more to be loved, and it is this of which we now speak."

XL.

There arose one day, about the hour of nones. Here again Dante's fancy recurs to the number nine. The *nones* are the canonical offices of the ninth hour of the day.

In those crimson garments in which she had first appeared to my eyes. It will be remembered that Dante says (ch. ii.) that when he first saw Beatrice she was "clothed in a most noble color, a modest and becoming crimson."

XLI.

The blessed image which Jesus Christ left to us as the likeness of his most beautiful countenance. The most precious relic at Rome, and the one which chiefly attracted pilgrims, during a long period of the Middle Ages, was the *Veronica*, or representation of the Saviour's face, supposed to have been miraculously impressed upon the kerchief with which he wiped his face on his way to Calvary. It is still preserved at St. Peter's, and shown each year on special occasions. It is referred to in the *Paradise* (xxxi. 103–108) : —

"As he who peradventure from Croatia
Cometh to gaze at our Veronica,
Who through its ancient fame is never sated,
But says in thought, the while it is displayed,
'My Lord, Christ Jesus, God of very God,
Now was your semblance made like unto this ?' "

For an account of the Veronica see Mr. Longfellow's note on this passage.

Those who go to the house of Galicia are called pilgrims, *because the burial-place of St. James was more distant from his country than that of any other of the Apostles.*

Pilgrim, from *peregrinus*, "a foreigner," or "stranger."

The shrine of St. James, at Compostella (contracted from *Giacomo Apostolo*), in Galicia, was a great resort of pilgrims during the Middle Ages, and Santiago, the military patron of Spain, was one of the most popular saints of Christendom. The reader of the *Paradise* will remember the lines (xxv. 16–18) : —

> "And then my Lady, full of ecstasy,
> Said unto me : 'Look, look ! behold the Baron
> For whom below Galicia is frequented. ' "

See Mr. Longfellow's note on this passage.

Chaucer says, the Wif of Bathe

> "had passed many a straunge streem ;
> At Rome sche hadde ben, and at Boloyne,
> In Galice at Seynt Jame, and at Coloyne."

And Shakespeare, in *All 's Well that Ends Well*, makes Helena present herself as "St. Jacque's pilgrim."

XLII.

By another which begins "To hearken now." This was the sonnet written for his friend who was near of kin to his lady in glory ; see ch. xxxiii.

And this the Philosopher says in the second book of his Metaphysics. The words of Aristotle here referred to are

probably the following: "As the eyes of bats to the daylight, so is our understanding to the clearest things in nature." (*Metaphysics*, ii. 1.)

Dante refers to this passage again in the *Convito* (ii. 5).

Beyond the sphere that widest orbit hath
Passeth the sigh which issues from my heart.

That is, to the motionless Empyrean.

He sees her such that his reporting words
To me are dark.

When Dante is himself uplifted to the Empyrean, his vision is at first dim with excess of light, and he comprehends not what he beholds: —

"Not that these things are difficult in themselves,
But the deficiency is on thy side,
For yet thou hast not vision so exalted."
Paradise, xxx. 79–81.

XLIII.

And then may it please Him who is the Lord of Grace, that my soul may go to behold the glory of its lady, namely, of that blessed Beatrice, who in glory looks upon the face of Him qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus [who is blessed forever].

The *New Life* fitly closes with words of that life in which all things shall be made new, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

The *Divine Comedy* was finished not long before Dante's death in 1321, thirty-one years after the death of Beatrice.

Dante ended the letter which he addressed to Can Grande

della Scala, in sending him the *Paradise*, with the following words which recall and repeat the ending of the *New Life* : —

"And because the beginning and source being found, namely, God, there is nothing further to be sought, — since he is the Alpha and Omega, that is, the beginning and the end, — this treatise terminates in God, *qui est benedictus in sæcula sæculorum.*"